

Buttonwood

and Other Poems

L. F. BITTLE.



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Leonard F. Bittle.

BUTTONWOOD

AND

OTHER POEMS

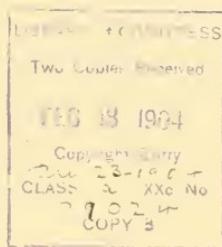
BY
L. F. BITTLE.
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FIRST EDITION.

Here, reader, in their metric flow,
Are treasured thoughts of long ago.

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L. F. BITTLE.

PREFACE.

It is not without misgiving that I allow these verses to be printed in a book. With a few exceptions they were written many years ago as a relaxation from severe study; and now as I revise them for publication they do not please me as they did when I composed them. But the critical mood is not the poetical one, nor is an author always the best judge of his own work. Besides, as time passes, our tastes change, and many things which delight us in youth become insipid in old age. And if we make good use of the opportunities afforded us, our standards of excellence rise higher and higher, though they never reach absolute perfection.

Poetry appeals to the sensibilities rather than to the intellect; and when a person by means of verse reveals his inner life, he can reasonably expect little genuine sympathy except from those whose experiences have to some extent been similar to his own. His readers must put themselves into the mood in which he writes, and forbear criticism on his style if they would fully enjoy his stanzas.

Many of these effusions, selected from a much larger number and here printed in permanent form, are records of real life. Others are merely pictures of fancy. Still others have only a personal or local interest. All of them, such as they are, I offer to my friends, and especially to my beloved daughters, Mona and Linnæa, in the hope that my unpretending stanzas will leave in the mind of the reader some thoughts worth remembering.

L. F. B.

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BUTTONWOOD.

A CONTRAST.

Dear Buttonwood, I love thy shade,
For sweet contentment fitly made;
And when I walk the crowded street,
And mark dull care in most I meet,
Or cross at noon the dusty Square,
And swelter in the fervid glare
Of sunshine from the August sky,
I long into thy shade to fly.

There would I lie beneath the trees,
And hear the droning of the bees,
Or listen to the rippling flow
Of waters in the vale below,
Or watch the thrushes as they glide
Among the bushes at my side,
Or overhead the gambols see
Of blithe and noisy chickaree;
For any sight or any sound
That in thy solitude is found,
Is picturesque or musical
Contrasted with the city full
Of all the senses hold in dread,
Or baleful planet ever shed.

Oh, not for me the marts of trade,
Those scenes which man himself has made!
Where Wealth and Poverty reside,
And shame each other side by side,
Where thieves and beggars most abound
In courts and alleys all around,
Where harsh extremes of life we meet
Which ever way we turn our feet,

Where daily we are forced to grieve
O'er wretchedness we can't relieve,
And where we view, with burning soul,
Injustice we can not control.

Pretentious mass of brick and stone,
Built up for sordid Mammon's throne,
The city stands and welcomes in
Each folly, vice, and grosser sin.
There artificial ways abound,
And useless etiquette is found,
And spirits, yearning to be free,
Are slaves to Fashion's tyranny.
The finer feelings of the heart
Are blunted by the cruel art
Which selfish customs, silly rules,
The mutual work of knaves and fools,
Have introduced to help us hide
Ourselves behind suspicious pride,
Or, what is often tenfold worse,
Our lives to poison with a curse
Of Vanity, Truth's wily foe,
That veils in falsehood all below.

The thing ycleped Society
Is often but a mockery
Of those warm instincts of our race
Which prompt each one to take his place
Amid the gathering of friends,
And share the pleasure that attends
Informal interchange of thought
And gentle courtesies unsought.

Amid the fevered life we lead,
The things our natures mostly need,
The quiet hours from business free,
Companionship and sympathy
Of those whose friendship, full and true,
Brings out our better selves to view,—
These are the things we seldom find
But others of a different kind,

Approved by Madam Grundy's voice,
We see presented for our choice.

We gain admission to a clique,
If through the wonted means we seek,
And then are privileged to greet,
With stilted manners, the élite,
Then at the door to make a call,
And hear a servant from the hall
The "Not at home to-day" repeat,
And bow us back into the street.
Or present else, by present grace,
In glaring parlor—horrid place!—
We meet with others who have come
To see the folks now all "at home"
For entertaining every guest,
And showing off when at their best.

Thus in such parlors meet we them
Whom rules of etiquette condemn
To spend the hours in pleasure's search,
That always leaves them in the lurch.
When these *soirées* we look right through,
What sorry sights are brought to view!
Cards, dances, gossip, promenades,
With brainless fops and silly maids
As leading actors in the scenes,
While very rarely intervenes
A single minute of good sense
To pay for trouble and expense.
'Tis but a sham, as all can see,
Where none is happy, none is free,
But all are under bondage sold
To customs useless, senseless, old,
The relics of a barbarous day,
Which should forgotten be for aye.

Thus governed by a vicious taste,
We favor luxury and waste.
In most things coarse, in none refined,
To real beauty we are blind;

And gaudy colors, graceless lines,
And inappropriate designs
Fill up the measure of our sight,
While all around us, day and night,
The loveliness of Nature lies
Unnoticed by our careless eyes.

Behold the Miss, yet in her teens,
Appear in Fashion's gaudy scenes.
Her manners masculine and rude,
No qualms of modesty intrude,
To mortify her swaggering air,
Or check the boldness of her stare.
Her conversation void of sense,
But full of simpering pretense,
Superlatives the verbal stock,
That constitutes her endless talk,
With slang acquired upon the street
To make her rhetoric complete.
But what she lacks in mental grace
She furnishes in powdered face,
And cheeks whose tinting not their own
Suggest a tea-rose fully blown.
Her costly wardrobe most her care,
She lives in Fashion's poisoned air,
A thing of vanity and pride,
That fools admire and wits deride.

Yet such a creature lacking soul
And all true power of self-control,
With fitful temper, empty head
Presumptuously is often led,
To seek, competing with the good,
The place of wife and motherhood.
No wonder that the age declines
When imbeciles usurp the place
Of guardians to the coming race.

See too her masculine compeer
In social life his front uprear
And claim the homage only due

To virtue high and manhood true.
His manhood figures tailor-made,
With hatter's and cordwainer's aid
And jeweller's, who join their skill
To have their dandy "dressed to kill."
Thus in the latest style attired,
Somehow withal he has acquired
The art to say with gallant air
A thousand nothings to the fair,
And make himself, it is confessed,
In drawing rooms a welcome guest.
For piety he has a sneer,
For womanhood a bow or leer,
For noble aims concealed disgust,
And much prefers a life of lust;
Yet covers up each base design
With pretty phrase and manners fine;
A hero in Flirtation's eyes,
But one whom honest men despise;
To useful labor quite averse
He battens on his parents' purse,
And all their hard-earned cash he drains,
Till not a picayune remains.
In dissipation an expert,
Yet scarce in reputation hurt
By drunkenness or worse excess,
He glories in his worthlessness;
Though poor perchance, yet in his air
He apes the haughty millionaire,
And plays with impudence his part
A libel in his head and heart,
A low burlesque in all his plan
Upon the noble race of man.

Nor should I leave unnoticed here
Old maids and widows that appear
As eager venders in the mart
Where bids are made for hand and heart,
And males and females long to pair,
If they can win the lion's share.

What toils are spread, what nets are cast,
What arts to bind the victims fast,
What time and labor freely spent,
By those on Hymen's ends intent,
All know who watch the amorous game
The crafty play in friendship's name!

O woman, long by poets praised,
And on a pedestal upraised,
Which Flattery, with cunning hand,
Has built upon the treacherous sand,
No angel art thou, but a child
Of mother Eve, who was beguiled
To eat of that forbidden tree,
The source of all our misery.
It is not well that we should paint
Thee in the likeness of a saint,
While follies in thy life abound
And sin within thy soul is found.
Thou knowest it is better far
To limn thy features as they are,
To show thee stripped of all disguise,
And turning from romantic lies,
Speak out whatever we shall find
To be the measure of thy mind.

Thou lovest ev'ry pretty thing,
The ostrich plume, the flicker's wing,
The golden watch, the flashing gem,
And standest ready to condemn
Each useful change and wise device,
Unless the nabobs call it "nice";
Thou tortur'est thy graceful form,
Thou goest chilled or over-warm,
And pinching feet and squeezing chest,
Deforming both at Style's behest;
Thou oft art Fashion's willing tool,
Till men deride thee as a fool;
Thou lovest gossip, nor afraid
Art thou of scandal's ruthless trade,

That dares to wring with pain intense
The shrinking heart of innocence.
Thou art no slave, as thou hast pled,
But art of social life the head;
In ev'ry thing thou hast thy say,
In most, thine own unthinking way,
And the whole world is at thy will,
That world of which thou speakest ill.
The world is what thyself hast wrought
Out of the children thou hast brought.
The infant race is thine to train
To thy desire in heart and brain,
And none are sinners overmuch,
But thy example makes them such.
Didst thou but cease thyself to hurt,
Resolved no more to dress and flirt,
From vanity release thy soul,
And put thee under Truth's control,
Thou wouldest be what we all desire,
What angels love and men admire.
Then the whole world at thy command
On Virtue's side would firmly stand;
All in her practice would engage,
And usher in the golden age.

Then let the better time roll round
When men shall rational be found,
When, conscious of their high estate,
They lift themselves, with hearts elate
Out of the low and miry plains,
And washed of their polluting stains,
Climb up the steeps to regions fair,
And breathe the purer, upper air,
Where no miasma taints the soul,
But, under Truth's serene control,
Each shall accord with virtue's plan,
And reach the stature of a man.

When God the land and sea had made
And the broad heavens in stars arrayed,

He looked on all, and called it good,
But saw the need of one that should
Be over all, and all admire,
And to the noblest deeds aspire.
So in pursuance of his plan
To crown creation's work with man
He from the dust a body made,
Which every grace of form displayed,
Then into it he breathed a soul
Of life and thought and self-control.
In his own image God thus formed
The first man, Adam, to be warmed
By love divine, and to be found
With strength and skill to till the ground.
God placed him then in Eden's bowers,
To dwell amid its trees and flowers,
And have its fruits as recompense
For labor and for innocence.

But man as yet was all alone,
And social ways had never known;
So God formed Eve, a partner meet,
To make the joy of life complete.
These two from their Creator came
All free from thought of sin or shame.
And when, by Satan led astray,
They were from Eden sent away,
It was to earn their daily bread,
And be by honest labor fed.

The Lord designed the human pair
For rural scenes and country air.
The city was an after-thought
Which Cain the fratricidal wrought,
When from the presence of his God,
He fled into the land of Nod.
There he, of Adam's race the worst,
To found a city was the first.
Long afterwards, the people, bent
On city life, to Shinar went,

To make a name, and build a tower,
For unity of speech and power.
But God soon checked their vanity,
When he came down their work to see.
He in their midst confusion wrought,
And brought their foolish scheme to nought.
With divers tongues he scattered all
The builders of the tower tall,—
The builders of that city vast
Whose name 's a byword of the past.

Experience seems to indicate
That man, to gain his best estate
Requires a freedom only found
Within the country's ample ground
For folks in crowded cities grown
Like hot-bed plants too closely sown
Are healthy none, but all are frail,
And of life's noble objects fail;
Like fruit in humid cellar piled,
The tainted have the sound defiled,
Till none infection can evade,
But all the mass becomes decayed;
Or else like fish of various kind
Within a little pool confined,
The larger ones the smaller eat,
And with their victims thus replete,
Become a proud and pampered few
That one another envious view.

There breathing the unhealthy air,
With scant attire and meagre fare,
The poor oft toil from day to day,
Beneath some haughty lordling's sway,
Whose only merit is his wealth,
Obtained, perchance, by fraud or stealth.
They by replenishing his store,
Increase their penury the more,
And sinking lower in the scale,
As self-respect and honor fail,

From virtue's paths at last they stray,
And reckless walk the downward way.
With evil deeds familiar grown,
They form a circle of their own,
And thus remain an outcast race,
But still retentive of their place,
They like a plague contagion spread,
Empoisoning the fountain head
Of social life and happiness—
A fearful wrong without redress!

There guarded by our license laws,
With Appetite to plead his cause,
The Alcoholic Demon reigns,
And in his retinue retains
The hydra dire of vice and crime,
And, with an impudence malign,
Enthrones himself in church and state,
And rules the little and the great.
Untrammeled in his evil ways,
Upon the nation's life he preys,
Degrades the lofty, stains the pure,
And robs the wealthy and the poor,
Arouses hatred, kindles strife,
And makes the land with murder rife,
Each pauper house and prison fills,
The innocent assails and kills,
Breaks woman's heart with purpose fell,
And dooms his devotees to hell!
His horrors our officials view,
And all permit for revenue,—
Permit, encourage, sanction all
The fiendish deeds of Alcohol,
That they may fill the public purse
With taxes from a nation's curse.

When Guttenberg, on German ground,
The noble art of printing found,
And, first of all, the book divine
To type committed, line by line,

That men the way of life might know,
And with the love of virtue glow,
He little dreamed that after years
Would justify the pious fears,
That Satan, in a printer's dress,
Was the magician of the press.
But here the devil has his sway,
And guides the issues of the day.
In books and papers he conceals
The virus which to all he deals—
The unbelief that now pervades
The social body, and invades
The church and home, till all around
Fools, rakes, and anarchists abound,
And scoffers, worse than those of old,
All virtue in derision hold.
And all this verbal deviltry
Within the city rages free;
The cultured and the rabble rout
Here from the busy press pour out
An endless stream of idle words—
The jabber of Stymphalian birds—
Science and sermons full of sneers,
And novels packed with quips and jeers
At the old book whose righteous law
Demands a life without a flaw,
And whose good message rescues all
From sin that heed the gracious call.

Such scenes in city life we see,
And even worse we know to be
In all the dens and haunts of sin
Found every where the town within.
In every clime and every age,
Since man began his pilgrimage,
The greatest scourges of our race
In cities find their brooding place.
There nurtured in their dark retreats,
Till stronger grown they seek the streets,
And overleaping every bound,

They ravage all the country round.
Thus rapine, war, and tyranny,
Blighting all lands from sea to sea,
And pestilence that walks by night,
Nor shuns the noontide's glaring light,—
Begin their course where pleasure's dome
Looks down on misery's squalid home.
So Rome the mighty testifies,
Whence all the ills beneath the skies
Have issued forth in dire array,
To make the tribes of men their prey.

Give me the country's quiet life,
Far from the crowd's unseemly strife,
Give me the scenes that God has made,
And with his matchless skill arrayed
In all that charms the thoughtful eye,
Or wakes the soul to ecstasy.

The greatest want that I have known,
A want I scarcely dare to own,
Is sympathy in such pursuits
As those my vagrant fancy suits.
For plodding work my restless mind
By Nature never was designed,
Much less has she my spirit made
Inclined to politics or trade,
Nor more congenial is the life
Which spends itself in legal strife,
Nor can I Galen's art endure,
More likely far to kill than cure,
Nor have I cherished a desire
To cleric honors to aspire,
For pastorating is a trade
By which a livelihood is made,
And men in sombre garb attired,
By pious folks are yearly hired
To please the critics of the pew,
And bring the sect with honor through.

Unmerchantable thoughts are mine,
That with my purposes entwine,

And lead me to far different ends
Than those for which the world contends.
I hate the clamor of the crowd,
And gossip constantly allowed
In all the circles called polite—
That name so seldom used aright—
And every vain amusement made
For idlers of themselves afraid;
I hate the envy and the pride,
That form a mountain high and wide
Between the souls that else would run,
Like crystal streamlets into one;
I hate Ambition's mad career,
Supplanting love with cruel fear,
And keeping struggling millions down,
That one may wear a worthless crown;
I hate the noisy paths of life,
The eagerness and selfish strife,
The fires of rivalry that burn,
Whichever way our footsteps turn;—
I hate them all, and glad would flee
From all their scenes of misery.

From early childhood my delight
Has been to rove from morn till night
Where Nature holds her court serene
In leafy grove or meadow green,
Or where the uplands stretch away
To mountain steeps remote and gray.
The song of bird or hum of bee
Is music sweeter far to me
Than all the notes that man can bring
From wood, or brass, or sonant string.
I'd rather listen to the breeze
That sways the stately forest trees,
Than stand within cathedral dim,
And hear the grandest vesper hymn.

I well remember what strange awe
Seized on me when a child I saw

The heavens at ev'ning spreading far,
And Cynthia in her silver car,
And stars unnumbered shining down
From sceptred Night's imperial crown.
And ever since I've loved to come
Beneath this awe-inspiring dome,
This stately temple which the Word
That Darkness and old Chaos heard
Bade rise from its foundations deep,
To stand until the dead from sleep
Are called by that Almighty Voice
That made the sons of God rejoice,
And all the stars of morning raise
The loftiest anthems of their praise.
With fast dilating thought I then
Forget the petty creeds of men,
Forget the strifes of folly bred,
Where neither side by truth is led,
Forget each low, ignoble aim,
Each base desire of earthly fame,
Which leads so many souls astray
That might have gone the upward way,
Forget them all, with naught between
My spirit and the dawn serene
Of peace ineffable and love
Each earth-born feeling far above.
Bathed in the fount of pure delight,
My soul then takes an upward flight,
Explores aloft with ardor keen
Sweet realms by mortal eyes unseen.

But if I love in solitude
To ramble in the field and wood
And constant pleasure in them find,
'Tis not because in human kind
A cynical indifference
I bear, displaying want of sense.
No, in these lonely walks I feel
An interest in human weal
Far greater than I ever knew

When, wandering the city through,
My steps I frequently allowed
To mingle with the fevered crowd.

To one who looks at both when near,
Like rough statues men appear.
The chisel marks and numerous flaws
Defiance bid to Beauty's laws.
Lift up these to their home
Around some temple's lofty dome,
And each one, in its destined place,
Becomes a form instinct with grace,—
The distance covers every flaw
Which, just before, the gazer saw;
No sign of roughness is retained,
But smoothest elegance is gained.
So is it with uncultured man,
Who seems to mar great Nature's plan,
Presenting flaws on every side
To those who neighboring abide,
And watch the evils, day by day,
That in our common actions play.

Contemptuous feelings oft arise,
If man with too familiar eyes
Is scanned in this degenerate age.
But I, withdrawing from the crowd,
Where noise of conflict waxes loud,
Where Folly's victims ceaseless mourn,
And curse the day that they were born,
Where Vanity parades the streets,
And homage asks of all she meets,—
Find, in the lonely solitudes
Of meadows broad and lofty woods,
A prospect of each human scene,
With fault-concealing miles between.
The race abstracted from its crimes
And viewed throughout the changing times
Seems like a far-off statue grand,
Fresh from the unseen Artist's hand.

Thus distance lends to man a charm
That makes my bosom towards him warm.
The feelings of dislike and pride
That often prompt me to deride
The frailties of my fellow men
Are all exchanged for pity then;
And strength for duty thus I draw—
Strength to conform to every law
Belonging to the gracious plan
By heaven ordained for wayward man—
I draw, by Nature hither led,
From Truth's eternal fountain head.

But class me not with them who hold—
Pretended thinkers vain and bold—
That Nature of herself can show
What we so much desire to know,
That written on her ample page,
In characters for youth and age,
Are revelations of the way
That leads to Glory's endless day,
And that no further voice we need
If we but Nature's language heed.
Though beauties constantly appear
To man's enraptured eye and ear,
Yet Nature is forever dumb
To all who unenlightened come
To question her with anxious mind
About the things that lie behind
The mystic veil that hangs between
The visible and the unseen.
Philosophers with prying eyes
Have scanned the earth and starry skies,
And, with the plummet's slender line,
Have dipped beneath the ocean's brine,
But nothing more have ever found
In making their remotest round
Than varied matter bound by laws
That indicate a hidden cause—
Almighty force directing well,

But what it is they cannot tell.

What strange infatuations seize
All those who seek themselves to please!
At their wild follies oft I gaze,
Yet ever view them in amaze.
How sad that men with noble powers
Unworthily should spend their hours,
Fair Wisdom's hoarded gems forsake,
And Falsehood's dust for jewels take!
All men not brutishly inclined
Their lives in duplicate will find,
Like double currents in a stream,
That in contrarious motion seem.
One turbulently onward goes,
The other calmly backward flows;
One in gross matter must be sought,
The other in the realm of thought;
One life we have within the soul,
Completely under our control,
The other in the world of sense,
The sport of outward elements.
The latter mostly is preferred
Whene'er preference is averred;
For, strange to say, the outer world,
Where Strife's red banners are unfurled,
Where disappointments ever reign,
And pleasures lose themselves in pain,
Where souls, forgetful of the sky,
In sloughs of degradation lie,
Or, heedless of the warning call
Of Virtue, into ruin fall,
Where on the waves of passion toss,
Man floats a wreck, and then is lost,—
Has more attractions for our kind
Than all the beauties of the mind,
Or all the lasting joys confessed
To dwell within a peaceful breast.
I'd have my fellows raised, refined,
As the Creator has designed;

I'd have them turn from baits of sense
To faith in God and providence,
Leaving their present low pursuits,
Which have produced such bitter fruits;
I'd have them seek the things unseen,
The bays of virtue ever green,
Bring passion under strict control,
And guard that priceless thing the soul
From thought impure and wrong desire,
And it with noble purpose fire
To scale the heights where honor lies,
Immortal guerdon of the skies.

All true refinement has its spring
In generous purposes that bring
The soul to truth and purity,
And from all folly set it free.
'Tis not in forms of etiquette,
Nor lines by flaunting fashion set,
Nor any artificial grace,
That this refinement has its place.
No, 'tis a gift on men conferred,
Like power of music on the bird;
It is an instinct undefined
That rules within the owner's mind,
Repelling all things coarse and rude,
And welcoming the pure and good.
This instinct royalty insures,
And Nature's true nobility secures
To them who ever guard it well
And in its presence constant dwell.
Where such refinement can be found,
There Culture has a solid ground
On which her temple to upraise,
The graceful object of our praise.
Then speech and action all accord
To render man creation's lord,
A prince in thought and word and deed,
Made worthy of the highest meed.

The times, alas, in which we live

Few signs of real progress give;
For, notwithstanding all the stir
Of business, and constant whir
Of steam-propelled machinery,
And bustle loud of industry,
The whole is oft a specious show
That to a race already low
Becomes a blandishment of ill
Which will degrade it lower still.
Though this, the boasted age of steam
Surpasses fable's wildest dream,
Binding the long-rebellious main,
Like Xerxes with his iron chain,
And hurling with unerring hand
The lightnings over sea and land,
Its triumphs merit not our praise,
For they the race can never raise
Above material sensuous life,
And turn it from the bitter strife
Of selfishness and cruel pride,
And crush the serpent lusts that glide
Around fair Virtue's sacred bower,
And poison all within their power.
These triumphs which increase the store
Of pampered Wealth are often more
Like dire defeats that mar the plan
Of Providence and ruin man.
The highly vaunted victories
Our century now daily sees,
Where Science toiling like a slave
In gloomy mine or ocean cave,
In workshop or in clattering mill,
Or elsewhere at its masters' will,
May in the end prove worse than those
Great Hannibal won o'er his foes.
He, foremost soldier of the world,
His standards on the Alps unfurled,
Defied their icy summits grand,
And, bursting on Italic's land,

Swept all before him in dismay,
Until on Cannæ's bloody day
He crushed the legions of old Rome
And shook Tarpæca's sacred dome.
But victory turned to defeat:
In Capua's luxurious seat
He with his army staid a space,
And laid the ruin of his race.
The conquered Romans were his bane,
And, with corruption's fatal chain,
Bound his unthinking veterans fast,
And proved his victors at the last.

How few there are whose wishes rise
To compass deeds of high emprise,
Who cast the chains of matter off,
Though fear may doubt and wit may scoff,
And in the cleansing fount of truth
Renew their innocence and youth.
Leon, 'tis said, with eager band
Of Spaniards through the Flowery Land,
Sought far and near the fabled spring
Whose waters to the bather bring
That cleaves their crystal purity
The loveliness of infancy,—
Elastic health and beauty's bloom
That fear no sickness, dread no tomb.
The soldier found not what he sought,
And all his labors were for naught.
Deluded by an idle tale
Like that about the Holy Grail,
He wandered on till hope was spent
And death the fatal arrow sent.
Not so with him who seeks the wave
In which his weary soul may lave:
Close, close beside him it is found,
And in our quiet hours the sound
Of its low murmur meets our ear,
The sweetest music mortals hear.
Beside its sparkling waters deep

May our freed spirits ever keep,
And gather flowers of fadeless sheen
That grow upon its margent green.
And bathe till washed of all alloy
We reach the golden gates of joy!

There is enough in nature's plan
To satisfy the needs of man;
The fields afford him daily food,
And thus supply material good;
To serve him all the forces vie
That govern earth or rule the sky; *
For him the seasons make their round,
For him each pleasing sight or sound,
For him alone the task to trace
The soul that beams through Nature's face,
To lift the veil that hangs between
Mere matter and the Great Unseen,
To walk in paths before untrod,
And learn the wondrous thoughts of God.
But in this unbelieving age,
Though Nature's works the minds engage
Of thousands wandering to and fro,
And watching closely as they go
Whatever moves or quiet lies
Upon the earth, or in the skies,
Or in the everchanging sea,
They fail to solve the mystery
Of Nature's origin and laws,
And overlook the Primal Cause,
Without the knowledge of whose will
They wander in the darkness still,
Or cheated by the fitful glare
Of science through the murky air,
They shut their eyes to higher light,
And fall and perish from our sight.

They who from error are made free
By him whose voice at Bethany
Resistless forced the gates of doom,

And brought the sleeper from the tomb,
Can see with their anointed eyes
The mystery that hidden lies
From them whom vanities enthral
Or superstition's rites appall.
The world which we by sense perceive
And pleasure from it oft receive
Is like those priestly symbols found
On obelisks with ages crowned
Along the Nile's enchanted flood
Whose waters once were turned to blood.
The traveler these curious lines
Of ancient learning's sculptured signs
Inspects, and if he has the key
That will unlock the mystery,
He passes through the hallowed door,
And reads the sacred thoughts of yore.
So he who views with reverent eyes
The world of sense that round him lies,
And all interprets by the word
Of Him whose voice Judæa heard,
Removes the veil and wondering sees
The mystery of mysteries.

As we the panorama view
Of changing Nature ever new,
Let us remember whose skilled hand
Has traced for us the picture grand.
As on it we enraptured gaze,
Let us the Mighty Artist praise,
And in our heart's most sacred shrine
Burn incense to His art divine.

O witching power of limning Art,
Source of delight to every heart,
Whose pleasures never leave behind
Regretful thoughts to vex the mind,
May I a moment turn to thee
Whom I have loved from infancy?
Thou art fond Nature's dearest child,

Her second self whose manners mild
Allure us to thy mother's home,
And lead us in her steps to roam.
How many a day of joy serene,
With beauty gracing every scene,
I've spent with thee in years agone,
Whose memories crowd my heart upon,
And waken still the old desire
Unto thy garlands to aspire.
With book and pencil have I strayed,
And counterfeits of Nature made,—
Of landscapes stretching far away
Till lost in distance dim and gray,
Of rocks and stones with moss o'ergrown,
Of waterfalls in forest lone,
Of stately trees with vines festooned,
Where wood-thrush oft his notes attuned,
Of flower, and bird, and insect race,—
All these my pencil stopped to trace.
And thus engaged I wondering found
An unsuspected world around;
I saw new beauties every hour
Unveiled by Art's increasing power;
What seemed to others commonplace
To me appeared replete with grace:
The hut where poverty abode,
Each group of weeds beside the road,
The meanest object that I knew,
When touched by Art's enchantment, grew
To my no longer clouded sight
A thing of beauty and delight.
And this new sense which then she gained
My soul has ever since retained,
And ever since with reverent eyes
Beholds the loveliness that lies
In common things that seem uncouth
To minds that seek not hidden truth.

There is a spirit that we call
The Spirit of Beauty, filling all

Of Nature's works on every hand,
In the deep sea and on the land;
And only those whom Truth have crowned
With purest love are worthy found
This radiant Spirit to receive
And lasting impress have it leave
Upon their hearts, of deepest joy
That worldly cares cannot destroy.
This Spirit is the wondrous power
That in creation's morning hour
Moved o'er the silent, shoreless sea
In steps of awful mystery,
Ere yet sweet joy-inspiring light
Came forth first-born of ebon Night,
And ere from out the waters rose
This earth, which now with beauty glows.

O wondrous Spirit, let me be
Companion ever meet for thee;
Take my obedient hand in thine,
And lead me to thy secret shrine,
And there anoint afresh mine eyes,
That I may see thy mysteries;
Thine own sweet self to me impart
Until thou fillest all my heart,
And then a fitting hymn I'll raise,
O Spirit of Beauty, to thy praise!

True peace, content, and happiness
Cannot be found, we must confess
Amid the selfishness of trade,
Where honor is for riches paid,
And men—I blush such truth to tell—
Their very souls for gold will sell!
My mind has had another bent,
On different scenes my thoughts intent,
Where purer light of heaven falls
Far, far beyond the city's walls,
On flowery mead, and sparkling rill,
On rocky glen and wooded hill.

A dream with which my fancy wild
Has pleased me even from a child
Has been to have a country home,
From which my heart should never roam.
I'd have it far from Traffic's din
Some wood-surrounded vale within,
A varied stretch of fertile land
By hills hemmed in and mountains grand,
With here and there a crystal stream,
Whose waters in the sunlight gleam,
Or, sheltered by the rocks and trees,
Scarce feel the touch of wanton breeze.
Toward the southward there should be
A prospect of the dark blue sea.
Raised high above the watery waste,
My cozy mansion should be placed,
But near enough to hear the roar
Of tempests on the ocean shore,
And afterwards to see the sand
Foam-covered on the rocky strand.

I'd have a house of rustic style,
Not some pretentious city pile,
But low, secure, with ample space
For all that rural life can grace.
Four rooms below, and six above,
With the great garret children love,
Right through the midst an ample hall
From vestibule to rearward wall,
And each with window wide and high
For air and sunlight and the sky,
Would furnish all the space I need
To emphasize my rustic creed.
Upon the walls and slated roof,
Against the storms of winter proof,
The clinging ivy should be found
In glossy clusters massed around.
Within, the chambers finished plain
Should simple furniture contain,
For use and comfort all designed

Yet all displaying taste refined
Like that which cultured Grecia charmed
Before her race by wealth was harmed.

A garden park of rolling ground
This rural cottage should surround,
Where trees and flowers should grace the scene,
And other products intervene.
With spring's first breath of balmy air,
This garden park should be my care.
I'd neatly trim the hedges round,
Train up the vines, and clear the ground
Of leaves and twigs and withered stalks
By autumn strown o'er beds and walks.
The ground prepared by spade and rake,
Each plot and path with care I'd make,
And early seeds in order sow
In spots where they would likeliest grow.
Soon vegetables should abound,
And flowery clusters bloom around,
Each in its season watched with care,
The useful, redolent, and fair.

While thus engaged I'd hear the song
Of vernal gladness all day long;
For fearlessly the birds should come,
A happy family, round my home:
The redbreast with his ebon crown,
The thrush with plumage grey and brown,
The bluebird herald of the spring,
The swallow tireless on the wing,
The oriole with orange breast,
And sprightly song, and swinging nest,
The chat that from his heap of brush
With quivering wing delights to rush,
And then with somersault retrace
His way into his hiding place,
The wren with noisy, bustling ways,
The mocking-bird with witching lays,
The flicker with his prying bill,

The night-resounding whip-poor-will,
The cardinal magnificent,
The crafty jay on plunder bent,
The sparrow with its trusting eye,
The lark, sweet poet of the sky,
The yellow-throat, the sly chewink,
The merry, ranting bobolink,
The cuckoo, prophet of the rain,
The killdeer, from the distant plain,
The pewit with its plaintive cry,
The dove with sorrow-breathing sigh,
The wood-thrush, rival of the flute,
The nut-hatch hoarse but never mute,
The partridge with his shrill bob-white,
The redbird with his feathers bright,
The cat-bird with his cunning stare,
The kingbird, tyrant of the air,
And terror of the busy hive
At which he makes his eager dive,
The chimney-bird with sooty coat,
And humming-bird with ruby throat,—
All these should come and many more,
And bring their music to my door.
And when the day of darkness born,
Unlocked the golden gates of morn,
Awakening the dreaming flowers
And ushering the rosy hours,
Then what a concert should resound
My leaf-embosomed mansion round!
Not Ole Bull and Jenny Lind,
With voice and instrument combined,
Could with a sweeter chorus there
Enthrill with joy the ambient air.
And when the health-inspiring sun
His course across the heavens had run,
And cooled his ruddy fervency
In waters of the western sea,
Those fairy melodies again
Would flow from meadow, hill, and glen,

Until the night had cast a pall
Of starry sable over all,
And universal silence reigned,
Unless, perchance the owl complained,
Or whip-poor-will with tireless throat
Disturbed the echoes with his note.

And I in turn protecting hand
Would lend to all this tuneful band.
No sportsman with his cruel eye
On my domain in wait should lie,
Or hover round with stealthy tread
To gloat upon the plamy dead.
No fierce grimalkin would I keep,
With horrid claw and fatal leap,
To make my warbling choir a prey,
And bear their bleeding forms away.
No, every feline should be sent
Into unending banishment,
Far from each haunt and nesting tree
Of my sweet band of minstrelsy.
Free from all danger they should flit
Among the trees, or swinging sit
Upon the boughs, or play around
Suspicionless upon the ground;
And some in time, familiar grown,
Would view me as a friend well known,
And venturing often to my feet,
From out my open hand would eat.

There would I spend the fleeting years,
Remote from all tormenting fears
That fill the city's fevered life,
Where men with men in Mammon's strife,
Or wild Ambition's thorny path,
Fill up the cruel cup of wrath,
And hurried on from day to day,
Throw all their precious hours away.
Divested of sad brooding care,
Content I'd breathe the quiet air.

Sweet Peace should come with angel wing,
And Joy domestic with her bring,
And both within my rustic cot
Should daily share my humble lot.
There with my books and busy pen,
As now, I still would labor then;
With rambles in the woods and fields,
To taste the sweets which Nature yields,
Or wanderings by the lonely shore,
Where Ocean murmurs evermore;
And now and then a cherished friend,
Additional delight, should lend
To sunny day and cloudless eve,
As each should give and each receive
Unconsciously from mind to mind
The grace of sympathy refined.

My Muse, too timid for the throng,
Would there renew her feeble song,
Delighted if a kindly few
Should hear her simple numbers through,
And, ever error passing by,
Regard her verse with partial eye.
Content with friendship's narrow fame,
No other audience would she claim;
Thrice happy to escape the claw
Of pouncing critic and the law
By spectacled reviewers passed
That every poem on a last
Made by themselves must closely fit,
Or be condemned as void of wit,
And destitute of every grace
That should in verse have constant place.

When Winter, with congealing hand,
Had waved his sceptre o'er the land,
And locked with ice the brooks and rills,
And had the mountains, and the hills,
And every valley, and the plain
That stretches to the distant main,

Envolved in his mantle white
In token of his kingly right
To rule the land, till genial May
Should overturn his icy sway;
Then, to my studies closely drawn,
I'd labor from the early dawn
Until the sun to seek his rest
Should draw the curtains of the West,
And through its golden portal glide,
And in its crimson chamber hide.
I'd fill my mind with polished thought
In stores of ancient learning sought,
And with increasing pleasure trace
The thrilling story of our race,
The rise of empires, pride of kings,
And all that humbler fortune brings
To them who quiet view afar
The rush of Glory's ruthless ear.
But when the eve in vestments gray
Succeeded to the fleeting day,
Upon a lounge before the grate
I'd lie reclined in musing state;
And as I viewed the ruddy flame,
So like the fickle glare of fame,
I'd bid my fancy freely rove
In vernal mead and autumn grove,
Or calling up the cherished dead
To greet me from their lowly bed,
I'd live again the scenes of yore
Upon life's happy morning shore,
Or clasping Hope's enticing hand
I'd wander on that blooming strand
Beyond Time's dark and troubled sea,
Where faith is crowned with victory,
And where the loved, now missing here,
In fadeless glory shall appear.

In such employment day by day
My life obscure would glide away;
Like rivulet whose waters pass

Unseen beneath the sheltering grass,
Or clustered alders bending low
To listen to its purling flow.
By feet of travel never stirred
And by the busy world unheard
It runs all pure and crystalline,
Fit emblem of that life of mine.
And such, O Thoreau, was thy lot
Secluded in thy pine-built cot
That in the cedar's shadow stood
Within the depths of Walden wood.
Leaving the restless crowds behind,
A sweet communion thou didst find
With Nature, and her mystic scroll
With skilful fingers didst unroll,
Displaying to our duller sight
Her secrets in a clearer light.
And thee her strangest child we call,
Yet one that loved her most of all.
Thy harmless life with her was passed,—
And in Earth's bosom now at last,
Indifferent to smiles or tears,
Thou sleepest through the changing years.

Alas! for all our plans below,
Our dreams of life that come and go,
And with us leave the gloomy thought
That all our happiness is naught.
In anxiousness we spend our years
Alternately with hopes and fears,
The things we wish we never gain,
Or win them only to our pain,
The bitter trials that we fear
Are mostly certain to appear,
And as we near at last the goal
And memory spreads before the soul
The record of the vanished days,
We view with terror and amaze
Neglected duties, evil deeds
Unhallowed thoughts and selfish needs,

While Conscience stern and pitiless
Redoubles then our deep distress,
Till Mercy coming from the skies,
With tender heart and tearful eyes,
Leads us to Him who bore our shame,
And bids us trust in His blest name.

O Thou, the glory of our race,
In whom all perfectness has place,
The Sinless Man in whom we see
The fulness of divinity,
The Christ of purity and love,
Of earth and yet from heaven above,
Thou dead yet living Nazarene,
The only God our world has seen;
Thy God adorns Thee with His crown,
And angels bend adoring down;
All heaven echoes with Thy fame,
All demons tremble at Thy name,
And all their oracles are dumb.
Thou wast and art and art to come,
The only hope of weary hearts,
Whose grace to struggling souls imparts
Strength not their own and righteousness,
To lift them from their dire distress.
On earth we wander lone and sad,
Till Thee we meet ashamed yet glad.
Thou cheerest us in trouble's day,
And drivest all our gloom away;
To Thee our eyes must ever turn,
For Thee our love must ever burn,
In Thee our trust secure will rest,
By Thee we shall at last be blest,
Through Thee we yet though dead shall live;
For Thou eternal life dost give
To all who trustingly have heard,
And walked obedient to Thy word.

It cannot be that Fate denies
The age for which creation sighs,

The age in rapture oft foretold
By seers and dreaming bards of old,
The age of universal love
Like that which reigns in heaven above,
When Virtue shall resume her sway,
And mental darkness flee away,
When Justice, not with penal laws
Shall sternly reassert her cause,
But with the voice of Conscience true
Obtain for all their every due;
When men no more shall seek for wealth,
But rather peace and ruddy health,
Attaining by their simple ways
To patriarchal length of days,
And by Religion wisely led
Gain knowledge at the fountain-head,
And daily find in Truth's employ
A rich reward of sweetest joy.
This golden age will yet appear,
Already is its advent near;
Afar upon the orient sky
The first gray tints of morning lie;
Soon shall arise our world to bless
The healing Sun of righteousness;
Then joy shall banish every fear,
And Eden's innocence appear,
And Earth with bridal glory crowned,
Among her sister stars renowned,
Shall see angelic hosts descend,
And mortals with immortals blend.

Fair Buttonwood, how far away
Am I from thee this summer day,
Perhaps no more to see the shade
Where often in the past I strayed.
Yet calm delight in thee I find
As I thy scenes recall to mind.
The glow of summer lingered still
Within the vale and on the hill,
The golden-rod his nodding plume

Upraised beside the purple bloom
Of ironweed and astor pale,
While by the brookside in the vale,
Reminder gay of brighter days
The sunflower spread his yellow rays,
And on the forest's varied edge,
Or towering from the hawthorne's hedge,
The maple trees began to show
The first red tints of autumn's glow,
The swallow from the sky was gone,
The oriole had fled the lawn,
And in the wood the earliest bird
That comes from out the north was heard,
When on a well-remembered day
I for the first time took my way
To see thy beauty and to hear
Kind welcome from the inmates dear.
As recollection brings to view
The ones whom once I found so true
I wonder if I am forgot
Or deemed as one who now is not.
I ask, because how very rare
Is friendship time does not impair,
Transforming it, howe'er intense,
At last to cold indifference.
A very few perchance we find
Who all their lives continue kind.
Our joys and sorrows, smiles and tears,
In spite of absence and of years,
They gladly share whene'er they learn
What way the tides of fortune turn,
But friends are mostly like the gay-
Plumed warblers of a summer's day,
That with the radiant June appear
But vanish in the autumn drear.
I ask because of one lone friend
Whom memory is wont to blend
With thy retreat and welcome shade,
And whom my Muse in fancy made

The auditor of all her song
In days serene now vanished long,
And whom from out her quiet rest
She thus in rhyming lines addressed:

“O thou whose voice from some near dale,
Where shades of loneliness prevail,
Has reached me in my forest glade
Encompassed with a deeper shade,
I thank thee with a heart sincere
For all thy words that greet me here
From thy dear lips intent to grace
With commendation every trace
Of merit in my simple lays.
Now wreathed by thee with friendship’s bays.
I know not why thou shouldst delight
To favor me with smile so bright,
And praise so highly what I wrought
In such distrust I often thought
It was a sad misuse of time
To spend it on my humble rhyme.
Yet this fond fancy fills my mind
That thou to me art all so kind
Because thou long hast been like me
A rambler near some lonely sea,
Where nought is heard along the shore
But billows moaning evermore;
Or else, afar from sounding main,
A rover on some upland plain
Thou hast attained to heights unknown,
Yet ever sadder, sadder grown
As thou in that pure realm hast found
Oppressive solitude around.

“If so, O friend, I can divine
What thou hast found in verse of mine,
Can speak for thee the mystic word
Which often in thy heart is heard,
And to thy life afford the key
Which opens every mystery.

"Like me thou lovest woods and streams,
Like me thou hast thy waking dreams,
Like me thou longest for a life
Afar from hate and pride and strife,
A life in which the law of love
Should govern all, as those above.
In thought allied, in heart alike,
No wonder, then that I should strike
The magic chords of sympathy
With my erratic minstrelsy.
And thy response so sweetly sounds,
In these my loved yet lonely grounds,
That thoughts long banished now return,
And new emotions I discern.
I think how pleasant it would be
To visit Nature's haunts with thee,
And hear the music which the trees
Awaken in the passing breeze,
Or listen to the fairy song
As endless waters glide along,
Or gather from each wild retreat
The hidden blossom fair and sweet.
And far more pleasant still to me,
As oft we loitered aimlessly
In wildest nooks without a fear,
Would be thy converse making dear
All spots where we had ling'ring stood,
In meadow green or leafy wood,
Or on the far-off mountain crest
To watch at eve the glowing west.

"But this, O friend, can never be,
So I afar must think of thee,
And view thee dimly through the days,
So often dark, and give thee praise
For all thou art, for all I see
Thou seekest earnestly to be.
If every one but understood,
Then might we wander where we would;
But in a world to wrong allied

The innocent are oft denied
Their kindest, best society,
That unsuspected they may be.
Nor is it wisdom to rebel
Against a custom ordered well
To check the false, and guard the true,
And give fair Virtue all her due.
So if we wisely love and well,
Still far apart we both must dwell,
Or meet as those who only feel
The selfishness they would conceal,
And who, in their contracted view,
All but the practical eschew.

“So wonder not if I seem cold,
And treat thee often as of old.
My tastes are womanly—my mind
Affects the simple and refined,
And like true Muse I gladly flee
The world’s turmoil and misery,
And walk in life’s secluded ways,
Indifferent to blame or praise,
Except from them whom love may move
My course to censure or approve.
And I, with Fancy’s plastic hand,
Have fashioned an ideal land,
Where dwell the fair and good and dear
That worthy of my love appear;
And there I spend my quiet hours,
Like child among the vernal flowers.
So wonder not if thou shouldst find
The chill reserve, the vacant mind,
But deem me all the time sincere,
And know that thou hast naught to fear.
Left to myself I little feel,
Or else my kinder thoughts conceal,
And range in fairy solitudes,
Where never vain regret intrudes
To mar the peace which there is mine,
And which I wish were ever thine.

"Our paths diverge—in separate ways
We two must pass the thorny maze,
Debarred from spending sunny hours
Together with the birds and flowers,
Till in the west the sinking sun
Reminded that the day was done,
And made us murmur that more fleet
Time should become when life is sweet.

"Be not discouraged—all around
Each faithful one is holy ground,
And messengers unseen are sent
To help us when our strength is spent.
The visible in which our thought
Is often centered is as naught
Compared with that immortal sphere
Whose confines reach us even here.
O valued friend, whom I must love
For what thou wouldest be, look above!
Within that cloudless ether blue
Once disappeared from human view
The Wondrous One to whom we raise
The holiest anthem of our praise.
He too, a pilgrim spent on earth
The years between his lowly birth
And that dread hour when on the tree
He suffered, died for thee and me,
In journeys sad and loneliness
More dreary far than words express;
Nowhere on earth a kindred mind
This man of sorrows e'er could find;
For who his thought could comprehend,
Or with his boundless spirit blend?
To God and man alike allied,
Alone he lived, alone he died.
The sympathy whose want he knew
He gives to all the ages through;
He comes to us our truest friend,
And bids us higher paths ascend,
He causes doubt and fear to cease,

And fills us with his perfect peace,
He leads us gently by the hand,
Till on the heavenly mount we stand.

"Our paths diverge, but they shall meet
Where brighter scenes our eyes shall greet;
Then, banished every fear of ill,
We shall our dearest hopes fulfil,
For in that realm of light afar
We shall be as the angels are,
And all the bliss on earth foretold
Shall realize a thousand fold.
Still if for human sympathy
And human friendship pure and free
Thy heart in secret often sighs
Till tears bedew thy gentle eyes,
Accept the humble gift I bring,
Assured that only truth I sing
When I confess how near allied
I feel to thee on friendship's side,
And how I wish, though years may fly,
Our mutual trust may never die,
But strengthen, till in heaven above
Our friendship ends in perfect love."

So sang my Muse in other days
In hope a tender soul to raise
From out the gloom that like a pall
Sometimes enfolds and chills us all.
She gained her end, and cheered the heart
Of one who took a transient part
In life and love, then bade adieu
To all we linger here to view.

Thus, Buttonwood, these thoughts I find
Far other things recall to mind,
That disconnected, yet allied,
Before my saddened fancy glide.
I think of thee, and quickly rise
Unnumbered scenes before my eyes,
At first all vague and strangely mixed,

But soon distinct in order fixed;
Sweet pictures of my childish hours,
Enwreathed with mem'ry's fairest flowers;
And images of later years
When hope was yet remote from fears.
Yes, Buttonwood, how much in thee
I find that stirs fond memory
To paint her faded scenes anew,
And bring the hidden past to view,
To call up Hope's forgotten dream
When life was still a placid stream,
And arch the bow of promise high
Again across life's morning sky,
And cause once more Ambition's ear
Those yet delicious sounds to hear
Which youth imagined came afar
From glorious Fame's triumphal car.
But why again recount the years
Bedewed so oft with memory's tears?
No! be their tombs forever sealed,
And let me without murmur yield
To those decrees of destiny,
Which, ruling all, omit not me.

This life is but a changeful day,
And swift its moments glide away.
The merry morn delights our eyes
With dewy flowers and pearly skies,
The noon beholds us bent in toil,
Or surging in the world's turmoil;
Of all soon weary we repine,
And long to see the sun decline;
The evening comes with sombre sky
But finds us unprepared—to die!
Then why the rage for wealth and fame—
A heap of gold, a fleeting name?
Why struggle we so hard for what
We know can satisfy us not?
Better avoid the useless strife,
And turn us to a higher life,

And seek the things that give us peace,
And our unfading joys increase.

Dear Buttonwood, may peace be thine,
And light of hope within thee shine,
Be thine amid the fickle years
A happiness that never fears,
And may thy bowers be ever green
Till Time shall bring the closing scene,
And thy last inmate leaves thy door,
To seek thy shelter nevermore!

But, Buttonwood, perhaps too long
I make this unpretentious song,
Which wanders like some lonely bird
That in the autumn may be heard
Repeating fragments of the tune
With which it welcomed smiling June,
Mingled with melancholy strains
Suggested by the dreary plains
And naked hills o'er which it flies,
And for their summer splendor sighs.
Yet hard it is to say farewell—
Sad word that like a funeral knell
Falls ever painful on the ear
And in the soul re-echoes drear.
Yet, I repeat; may peace be thine,
And Joy for thee her garlands twine;
And in the future far and dim,
O cherish still a thought of him
Who often in the days to come,
Though destined far from thee to roam,
In fancy will revisit thee,
Still mindful of the sympathy
That bade him come a frequent guest,
To seek thy shade and grateful rest.
And should my life attain the years
The Psalmist crowns with toil and tears,
May I have gained a safe retreat
Like thine to rest my weary feet,

Where memory musing o'er the past
May give me pleasure to the last,
And win my mind from vacancy
By oft recurring thoughts of thee.



ELLEMWOLD.

O look upon that crystal sea,
Far in the dim futurity,
 Where tempests never sweep,
But where the bright waves rise and fall,
Obedient to the zephyr's call,
 Along the sunny deep.

In fond embrace its waters hold
The lovely isle of Ellemwold,
 To hope forever dear.
Queen of all isles! its peaceful shore
A spring-like summer mantles o'er,
 With blessings all the year.

The softest beams of orient light
Play round its wood-crowned mountain hight,
 And o'er its fadeless bowers;
Its gentle skies the twilight through
Shed fragrant drops of pearly dew
 Upon its sleeping flowers.

More beautiful than famed Cashmere,
Or Tempe's vale to poets dear,
 Or Paradise of old,
Not Milton's muse from Eden sent
Nor all the powers to Raphael lent
 Could picture Ellemwold.

O how my soul with wild delight
Was thrilled when first within my sight
 This isle of beauty came,
For, lo, it was the bright ideal
Of all my dreams become the real,
 Another, yet the same.

Ye dreams of beauty, love, and joy,
Not you shall wasting years destroy,
 Or force to pass away;
Thought is eternal, and the mind
Its visions realized shall find
 In forms without decay.

At last, before our longing eyes,
Our sweet ideals will arise
 From out the graves of time;
All deathless then will meet our view
The beautiful and good and true,
 The glorious and sublime.

The sympathy here vainly sought,
The love unchanging and unbought,
 The friendship pure and warm,
As sweet realities will come
To beautify our future home,
 And all in perfect form.

Alas! for him who fails to find
One candid, sympathizing mind
 Or one true-hearted friend;
More lone he feels amid the crowd
Than where the tempest rages loud
 And skies and waters blend.

For he who sails upon the main,
Or wanders on the desert plain,
 Or in the pathless woods,
With Nature's self can converse hold,
And view her mystic scroll unrolled
 Or watch her changing moods.

But isolation is the lot
Of him who seeks, all else forgot,
 Truth's holy mount to climb;
He leaves the mob on Folly's plain,
And mounts the steep with toil and pain
 To Virtue's hight sublime.

But in that silent, cloudless air,
Though beautiful are all things there,
 His soul must dwell alone;
His cherished thoughts none understand,
Except the One whose gracious hand
 Life's upward path has shown.

There yearnings strong beyond control
For sympathy rise in his soul,
 And melancholy reigns,
While from the lower world upborne
A voice repeats in bitter scorn,
 O fool, for all thy pains!

Oh, cruel fate! when sundered far
From sympathy we wage a war
 Against the powers allied
To circumvent each generous plan
Designed to lift the soul of man
 From ignorance and pride.

Oh, cruel fate! when whom we love
We strive to elevate above
 This world's ignoble aims,
We find our plans misunderstood,
And evil rendered for our good,
 And scorned our highest claims.

But this the cruelest of all
That can the human heart appall,
 And rend it with despair,—
To have the friend we've trusted long
Turn on us with despite and wrong,
 And hatred's visage wear.

But noble minds will hide their grief,
And from its tortures find relief
 In hopes that constant rise
To cheer us in the gloomy night,
And bid us wait the morning light
 That soon will greet our eyes.

Though faulted much, misunderstood,
And deemed devoid of every good,
They hold their faith the same,
That time will yet evolve the true,
And give all patient hearts their due,
And crown each higher aim.

But who so willingly a fool
As he who failing in life's school
His given task to learn,
Sighs then for death to give release,
Determined here to banish peace
And hinder hope's return?

Then in the gloomiest hour of life,
Imbittered by the ceaseless strife
With error and with wrong,
When on the billows thou art tossed
And all to fearful eyes is lost,
Let hope be doubly strong.

Let not the tempter force thy soul
To yield herself to his control,
But on thy faith rely;
Close all the avenues to sin,
And thou the victory shalt win,
And every foe shall fly.

Not here we see the final Cause
That urges Nature's rigid laws,
Nor comprehend the scheme,
But we believe the gracious plan
Includes the happiness of man,
Though hopeless all may seem.

We wait until the troubled maze
Of Being opens to our gaze,
And Life is understood;
Then will our wondering eyes perceive
What now reluctant we believe,
Our evil works for good.

The Cycle has at length revolved,
The Mystery at last is solved,
 And all may read who can!
We'll take the cup of happiness,
And bid our lips forever bless
 The One who formed the plan.

Within this isle in safety rest
The sorrow-stricken and unblest,
 Soothed by delights untold;
And youth may bloom but never die,
And hearts may love but never sigh
 Within sweet Ellemwold.

This isle was formed for thee and me
In fairy beauty in that sea
 Where tempests never come;
Far from displeasing sight or sound,
Embosomed in a vale is found
 Our dreamland's happy home.

The bell which notes our golden years,
The bell which memory sadly hears,
 Has for the last been tolled;
Then let us, ere the fatal Three
Shall cut the thread of destiny,
 Seek out this Ellemwold.

Loose anchor from this dreary shore,
With life's sad wrecks all scattered o'er,
 And spread our sails anew;
Hope crushed and bleeding never dies,—
Behold her from the dust arise,
 Still to her purpose true.

Hushed is the tempest fierce and loud,
The light pours through the rifted cloud
 In streams of molten gold;
The troubled ocean soon we'll leave,
Already near us we perceive
 That tranquil sea foretold.

Let bitter memories of the past,
With all the darkness round us cast,
 Into oblivion fly;—
Thanks for the glorious prospect now,—
The crown of joy awaits our brow,
 Bright Ellemwold is nigh!

Now through the waves with rippling sound
Our frail bark nears the region crowned
 With amaranthine bowers;
A few leagues more, and we shall land
Upon the beach's golden sand,
 And Ellemwold be ours!

Blow stronger, O ye favoring gales,
With eager speed fill all our sails,
 And bring us to the shore!
We touch—we land—with hearts elate
We enter Joy's uplifted gate
 To pass without no more.

AUTUMNAL MUSINGS.

I. RADNOR.

I'm in old Radnor! 'Tis to me a place
Sacred above all others; here my eyes
First saw the light of heaven and the face
Of that best friend, my mother; here the skies
Seemed ever lovely, as amid the bowers
Of summer I beguiled my childish hours.

No other home on earth can be so sweet
As that in which our consciousness begins,
And love and hope in one existence meet
To share alike the good that either wins.
The brightest thoughts of life are treasured there,
And memory guards the trust with ceaseless care.

O Radnor, though to some thy quiet vales
And rocky hills have little to commend,
And other lands are praised for brighter dales
And woodlands vast where grace and beauty blend,
I fondly think of thee where'er I roam;
Thou art my natal ground, my earliest home.

Within thy groves and on thy meadows green
My infant feet first loitered, and my eyes
First learned to trace the beauties ever seen
In nature, and my mind first strove to rise
From out the visible and fleeting here
To Him who sits above the crystal sphere.

Now after years of absence I've returned—
Years of far wandering and constant change—
To greet thee with the accents which I learned
From my loved parents. O how passing strange
The mingling of the old and new this morn,
As here I rest awhile where I was born!

O glorious morning! who can sing thy power
To waken life and hope within the soul,
Or paint the splendors of thy regal hour,
When nature yields once more to thy control?
An inspiration and a joy thou art
To all who love thee with a simple heart.

The sun is up, and o'er the hilltop brown
His mellow beams fall slanting on the trees,
While here and there the leaves and thistle down
Whirl in the eddies of the south-west breeze.
It is in drear November, but the glow
Of Indian summer brightens all below.

A few long bars of red and purple cloud,
Deep fringed with gold, across the eastern sky
Lie motionless. The sun appears to crowd
Upon them with his disk of ruddy dye,
Which much enlarged, and freed from dazzling light,
And glare of summer, is a pleasing sight.

The haze of autumn fills the ambient air,
And vails all distant objects in its gray;
Along the streams that course the meadows bare
Faint forms of mist like sprites of midnight stray,
And, as I gaze, upon the breeze they rise,
And slowly vanish in the amber skies.

October's winds and rains soon stripped the wood
Of all the beauty that September gave
Of varied color; but the oaks withstood
The ruthless storms, their flaunting leaves to save.
They, with the cedars, lift their heads in air,
Like giant chiefs that all their armor wear.

The flowers have drooped and died, the gentle race
That through the spring and summer cheered my
heart,
And through th' early autumn; now their place
Is vacant; late I saw the last depart.
Their wilted stems a mournful sight will lie,
Till by the snow they're buried from the eye.

II. THE BIRDS.

The sweet south-west has spent its playful force,
And all is silent now, save yonder rill
Whose waters murmur o'er their pebbly course.
A moment more—I hear the blue jay from the hill;
There on a tall and slender chestnut tree,
He hoarsely scolds, and wakes the echoes free.

The flicker and the nuthatch too I hear
From out the timber, and the wary crow
Circles around the corn-shocks standing near,
And early snow-birds by the roadside show
Their winter plumage, as they hunt the seeds
Scattered among the grass and fallen weeds.

How dear to me is every sight and sound!
For these plumed denizens of woods and fields
Appear like cherished friends long lost now found.
And what a pleasure this reunion yields
Of bird and poet on this autumn day,
When dreamy thought resumes its olden sway.

The jay has flown, but here some robins come,
And perch upon the cedars at my right;
Save a sharp chirp, each redbreast now is dumb,
Food is their only care, and soon their flight
They'll take to climes beyond stern winter's reign,
And greet the sun o'er many a southern plain.

Of all the birds that animate the grove,
Or cheer with melody the haunts of men,
Thou, Robin, art the one that most I love;

And in the radiance of the spring-time, when
The whitened orchards scent the genial air,
No other music can with thine compare.

But, Robin, in the melancholy day
Of autumn must thy tuneful voice be still?
For Summer dead hast thou no fitting lay
To mingle with the dirges of the rill?
Ah, no! thy song's the echo of the Spring,
And only in her smile thy heart would sing.

That heart, perchance, is like my own this morn,
Filled with sad memories of the parting year,
And faded hopes that in the spring were born,
And decked my young life, then serene and clear,
Now often darker than the clouds that fly
Upon the storm that sweeps the wintry sky.

Yet sometimes when a sunny day appears,
Straying from out the spring into the fall,
And with its warmth wan drooping nature cheers,
I've heard thee, robin, drop thy plaintive call,
And fill the welkin with a joyous sound,
Forgetful of the desolation round.

And such a day methinks will this one be,
A day of sunshine to the eye and soul,
Bringing to view sweet scenes of infancy,
With hill and rock and stream and flowery knoll,
And leading forth those youthful forms once more
That played with me in merry days of yore.

III. THE LANDSCAPE.

The sun mounts higher, 'tis a fitting time,
The world shut out, to lose one's self in dreams
And gentle memories. But this hill I'll climb,
And view the landscape in the morning beams.
I've gained the top, and on a mossy stone
I set me down to gaze and muse alone.

Before me in the sunlight far away

Southward the cultured fields of Newtown lie,
And eastward, gilded by the morning ray,

The rugged farms of Easttown greet mine eye;
In Chester this, in Delaware that is found,
Two counties that in rural joys abound.

I like the prospect, though the flowers are gone,

And nature to the careless eye is dead,

And all seems desolate to gaze upon;

For even in the naked boughs o'erhead
What graceful forms and lines I see revealed—
The beauties that their summer robes concealed.

Unlike the city with its noisome streets

And cramped up houses, is the scene I view.

Here the pleased fancy her own picture meets

In Nature's groups and action, form and hue.
O'er all the eye delighted wanders slow,
And notes each object in the morning glow.

The beautiful is here in earth and sky,

Appealing to each gazer's mind and heart,
And giving glimpses of the depths that lie,

And the vast heights unreached by limning art.
For who a single tree has yet portrayed,
Or with his brush the tints of morning laid?

IV. THE SEASONS.

I like, in all the seasons, every scene

Where traces of divinity are found,

Where man's work does not wholly intervene

To shut out every natural sight and sound:

I love the winter's drapery of snow,

The Spring's rich bloom, the Summer's fervid glow.

And thee I love, O June, whose pearly skies

And blushing roses charmed my boyish heart,

And now, in later years, whose azure eyes

Bewitch me yet; nor will it soon depart,

The spell thou hast around me, thou most dear
Of all the daughters of the changing year.

Ah! once my fancies seemed realities,
As wandering in thy woods or by thy streams,
I listened to the murmur of thy bees,
Or saw at sunset hour thy magic beams
Transform the landscape to a glorious sight,
Like that where angels dwell in holy light.

But most I love the hazy autumn days,
When leaves are gayest and the later flowers
Still deck the meadows, and the yellow rays
Of sunshine glimmer through the woodland bowers,
And gaudy warblers from the Northland come,
Threading our forests on their passage home,—

The days when nature sits upon her throne,
In royal robes of richest purple dressed,
And wonders of magnificence are shown
Like those within the Islands of the Blest,—
These are my choice of all the retinue
Led by the sun his yearly circuit through.

How often did I, in the years long past,
Upon such days go forth to gratify
My taste for autumn scenery. Then I cast
Away all worldly feeling, putting by
The cares of life, and giving fancy wing,
Till like the blithe lark she would soar and sing.

Some chosen spots had I in those bright days,
Where frequently I rambled, and allowed
My soul to dwell with Nature and her ways
Admire, oblivious of the noisy crowd.
I well remember one—a meadow wide
Spreading along the forest's southern side.

A brook with alders skirted flowed along
The woodland, singing to the open day,
Or murmuring in the shade its endless song.

It was a lonely spot, as some would say;
But who where nature smiles can lonely be
Lacks yet fit culture for society.

There, in the spring, the violets first were found,
 There in the fall the latest asters stood,
There, culling blossoms, I have wandered round,
 Or musing lingered in the shady wood.
O happy autumns, rich in golden dreams,
How sweetly sad to-day your memory seems!

V. MEDITATION.

Full many an hour beneath some spreading tree
 Have I reclined without a single care,
And there consigned myself to reverie,
 With fancies formless as the misty air,
Till like a leaf upon the waters tossed,
In thought's infinity I wandered lost.

And as I lay under the sheltering tree,
 Through the cleft branches I would turn mine eye,
And gaze upon that silent mystery,
 The blue and boundless ocean of the sky,
Whose ships are clouds that sail the earth around,
A restless fleet that to no port is bound.

A silent mystery the sky I call,
 Yet silence has a meaning, and I felt,
As long I gazed upon the azure, all
 That can the heart with gentle speeches melt
To tenderness; then yearned I for the pure
And good that everlastingly endure.

What are these longings?—all this strange unrest,
 This turning to the Infinite alone?—
That have their place in every feeling breast,
 And, like the billow, make continual moan?
Is it the plaining of a homeless soul,
Exiled to time and under earth's control?

Returning then to self and consciousness,
I'd find the mysteries of Being rise,
And eager on my startled spirit press
For their solution: I would close my eyes,
Till reason, weary of the fruitless toil,
Upon herself would hopelessly recoil.

Glad then I'd look upon the world without,
Away from the invisible—look on the face
Of smiling Nature: she without a doubt
Was real; she, respondent to the place
Of sense and feeling, gave to me delight,
Filling my soul with scenes of beauty bright.

And now I come these visions to renew,
To live the dead but unforgotten Past again.
O'erhead the morning sky is still as blue,
As pure and balmy is the air, as when
I courted nature in the olden time,
And hope's wild bells rang out their sweetest chime.

Our day-dreams are the bright effulgence cast
Down from the summits of perpetual joy,
Which we shall scale triumphantly at last,
Forever purified from earth's alloy;
Then mysteries so long from all concealed
In light ineffable will stand revealed.

VI. NATURE.

I was the youngest of our family
By near ten years. The rest to manhood grown,
Or womanhood, could have no sympathy
With childhood's reveries; so left alone,
Companionship I sought in field and grove
With Nature, whom I early learned to love.

I wandered with my charmer everywhere,
Morn, noon, and eve, in sunshine or in shade;
And in her cloud-roofed temple of the air
Homage sincere my eager spirit paid,

Till reverence for her and silent praise
Became the worship of my early days.

But I was formed for gentleness and peace,
And only with her smiles could nature charm;
Her frowns made all my admiration cease,
And filled my breast with tremors of alarm:
With dread I saw the lurid lightnings fly,
As the loud thunder shook the earth and sky.

Since then I've loved such elemental strife,
(Oft custom makes us love the thing once feared,)
I've felt a joy when furious storms were rife,
Or horrid War his bloody standard reared,
When the red bolts of heaven to earth were hurled,
Or deadly cannon startled half the world.

Filled with her inspiration oft I sketched
Bright pictures of my future, lovelier far
Than all the autumn landscape she had stretched
Before me; crowned with amaranth the car
Of fame I mounted, and was named and praised
By countless thousands who with wonder gazed.

And thus began my dream-life, and the wild
And beauteous fancies that the poets bind
To word and measure came to me a child,
Filling with admiration all my mind;
And scarcely knowing yet or verse or rhyme,
I joyed in all things lovely or sublime.

VII. THE MORAL.

This is the lesson that I daily learn,
As I behold the world of constant change:
Never despair, but from the darkness turn,
And let thy spirit in the future range,
Then olden joys from out their graves will rise,
And golden sunshine cover all the skies.

For him who to his better self is true,
The brighter future in the present dawns;

Instead of clouds the heavens serene and blue,

Instead of waste green meads and flowery lawns
Await his smile, if he but dry his tears,
Rise in his strength, and banish all his fears.

The probable is mine and all beside

That man has e'er accomplished, even more
Than the most daring of our race has tried

I may attain, and reach the farthest shore
Of truth and joy, there make my anchor fast,
And of Columbuses become the first and last.

Mine is eternity in which to work

Out all the good a finite being can,
No failures, then, nor wily foes that lurk
For my destruction shall my plan
E'er thwart, or fill my soul with craven fears;
Light springs from darkness, heaven from sorrow's
tears.

VIII. CONSOLATION.

There is an inspiration in the scenes

Of genial nature that oft fills the soul,
Dispelling every cloud that intervenes

Between ourselves and the receding goal
Of expectation. Light again returns,
And in the fresh pursuit our ardor burns.

How often when with weary, downcast mind,

I looked in vain for Hope's sweet, sunny face,
Have I the scenes of men left far behind,

And sought the silence of some lonely place,
Deep hidden in the shadows of the grove,
Where free from all intrusion I could rove.

Years, years ago, on the far distant hills

Inclosing Somerset with oak and pine,
Ere yet the gentians by the meadow rills

Yielded their azure to the cold malign,
I took my way in bitterness of thought
And the seclusion of the woodlands sought.

As here and there my aimless steps I bent
Amid the trees luxuriantly that grew,
Soon was I on their graceful forms intent,
And quiet pleasure from their beauty drew,
Till all forgetful of each gloomy care,
I lived in golden light and balmy air.

And as the sunshine glimmered through the screen
Of many-colored leaves touched by the frost,
A little bird enraptured by the scene,
A reminiscence of the Eden lost,
Burst forth into a song that seemed to be
A prophecy of endless peace to me.

We never know what trials we can bear
Until we feel their weight upon the soul,
Then, though in anguish, we a smile can wear,
Like water sparkling o'er a rocky shoal,
And in appearance even gladsome be,
When we are plunged in deepest misery.

Full many a trouble that had been my dread,
Though only possible to me it seemed,
When to it I by destiny was led,
Was finally of little moment deemed;
So facile are our natures to conform
Themselves unto the winter and the storm.

Brave spirits are elastic, and they rise
Above the cruel strokes of destiny;
Aspiring ever unto cloudless skies,
From fell despair to winsome hope they flee,
And find a home within that beauteous land
Themselves create upon life's barren strand.

IX. ASPIRATION.

Why must our hopes outrun fulfilment? We
Are forced to gaze upon the unattained,
Like mariners hurled by the angry sea
Upon a naked rock, where they have gained

A respite brief from death, while in the skies
Mirage of fertile shores deceive their eyes.

We live false lives—Society enslaves
How many souls whose natural heritage
Is freedom, and the one who fearless braves
The cruel tyrant, and redeems the age
From social chains, will gain himself a crown
More precious far than Valor's red renown.

We wear our fetters, and we ceaseless toil
Our artificial wants to satisfy,
We murmur daily at our prison toil,
Yet hug our chains until at last we die.
What good accomplished?—Oh, how vain
Is human life spent all for sensuous gain!

Better to walk in Nature's narrow way,
And give the body only that much care
Which rugged health demands from day to day,
With simplest food its constant waste repair,
The plainest garments choose that art can name
To shield from cold and cover up our shame.

To eat, to drink, to dress with barbarous taste,
To make a formal call, to bandy words
Of trivial politeness, or to waste
Our hours of leisure on the restless herds
Of idlers that infest each social scene,—
Is scarce a reasonable life, I ween.

More than the body is the mind of man,
And therefore should receive the greater care,
To know, to speak, to act the best we can,
Ills unavoidable with hope to bear,—
For this let us arouse our sluggish powers,
And soon or late the victory is ours.

A little cot beneath the stately trees,
That shield from Summer's heat and Winter's storm,
A quiet nook where simple life with ease

Can unto Nature's various moods conform,
Is all man needs for home-like shelter here,
Where he can pass secure the changing year.

True industry is that which counts the cost
Of all things it endeavors to secure,
And dreads lest precious moments should be lost
In seeking riches that cannot endure;
The things that never perish are its care,
Wisdom divine and Virtue ever fair.

Our soul's ideals let us keep in view,
For they are harbingers of golden days,
Inviting us to force our passage through
The present world's entangled thorny maze,
And in the glorious future shall appear,
The good and beautiful we see not here.

Even on the earth do Wisdom's children find
A foretaste of the heaven for which they sigh,
Whose peace refreshing fills the child-like mind,
Whose joys inspiring all around them lie;
Life's precious chalice is our own to fill
With bitterness or sweetness as we will.

Our lives are linked with Nature, and all things
Created claim our praise or sympathy,
And every one with us an offering brings
Unto the altar of a common destiny;
They work for good to us, and in the end
Their immortality with ours may blend.

Man is the center of creation, all for him
Exists, and he for God, whose perfect scheme,
Set forth in types to us and shadows dim,
Appears more wondrous than the wildest dream;
And as a diamond to a mound of earth,
So man to suns is of superior worth.

For him the Christ upon Mount Calvary
Poured out the precious blood that saves from sin,
Enduring shame and untold agony,

That life eternal faithful souls might win,
And crowns of righteousness henceforth belong
And endless rapture to the blood-washed throng.

X. CHILDHOOD.

It is a common notion of mankind
That life is sweetest, happiest in its spring,
Because in looking back we call to mind
Instinctively the pleasures, and we bring
Ourselves to thinking that the pains were none,
And into self-deception thus we run.

I cannot always trust the tales that come
From Memory's lips. Schooled by Romance,
She speaks, and shadowy forms long dumb
Burst into witching song or lead the dance:
Changed to a vista of delight appears
The thorny path of far receded years.

Yet I can truly say of Childhood's morn,
That its fair scenes were what they now appear,
For many a lovely rose without a thorn,
Was mine, and many a hope without a fear;
And battling now to free the souls of men,
And downcast oft, I'd be a child again.

My first years spent in Radnor, then to thee,
Tredyffrin, came I in the spring-time mild,
With simple heart that joyed in all things free,
A lover of the beautiful and wild,
Confiding, hopeful, watching Nature's ways,
Unlearned in books, those friends of later days.

I well remember when my father moved,
With mother, sister, and our household goods,
And me his youngest and most dearly loved,
To our new home beside the chestnut woods.
It stood half-hidden by two cherry trees,
Whose blossoms scented then the vernal breeze.

The house looked south, its walls were mica slate,
The front was narrow, on the eastern side
A long piazza faced the garden gate:
A rural manse, where resting place for pride
Was found not, but content could come
And have beneath its roof a genial home.

In that abode where want and luxury,
With all their evils were alike unknown,
With food and clothing in sufficiency,
And needed care to mind and morals shown,
I passed my boyhood till, become a man,
In the wide world life's struggle I began.

XI. RAMBLES.

Fair and romantic was the neighborhood,
Varied with hills and dales on every side;
Far-stretching north and east the forest stood
Of oak and chestnut in their sylvan pride,
While laurels clustering thick upon the ground,
Or arching o'er the winding paths were found.

Here warblers of gay tint and sprightly song
Came numerous in the Summer, Spring or Fall,
Making the woodlands vocal all day long
With joy's wild note or love's sweet plaintive call,
While from his covert oft the rabbit strayed,
Or whirring pheasant darted from the shade.

To me these woods seemed full of mysteries,
As I explored their depths with curious awe,
Or lay upon the moss beneath the trees,
And pondered silently on all I saw.
The beautiful I sought in all around,
And what I sought in everything I found.

Soon in my lonely rambles I had grown
Familiar with each flower and tree and bird,
Each moss-grown rock and even every stone,
And all the varied sounds in woodland heard,

From the faint murmur of the hidden rill,
To the loud boom of grouse upon the hill.

All these by sight or sound, if not by name,

I knew, for I was then in books unread,
And ignorant of jargons that men claim

As science, which, from many a foolish head,
Issue in learned words or pompous phrase
That fill the thoughtless hearer with amaze.

I learned to use the pencil, and acquired
A measure of the skill of limning art
To reproduce the forms and colors I admired,

Preserving thus their loveliness in part.
And in the effort gained increase of sight
To view the handiwork of God aright.

Thus was my heart attuned to harmony
With the great world of Being, as I stood
Upon the threshold of its mystery;

And looking upon every work as good,
That power divine had wrought, soon was I led
To know and love great Nature's Source and Head.

Call ye such life the idler's? I reply
That this was my best training, and the way
To grow in strength and fairest symmetry.

The seeds of all good purposes that lay
Within my soul were started, took firm root,
And bore in after years their wonted fruit.

Who is the idler but the one who toils
To gather wealth he needs not?—thus to fill
His armory of life with golden foils

To fight a foe he never sees nor will.
He wastes his time with things he does not use,
But stores them up for others to abuse.

XII. A SUBJECT.

I want a subject—one to serve as text
For numerous stanzas. I can finish one

Without a special theme; but then the next
And sundry more cannot be easily done
Without a subject. I shall look around,
For some suggestive thing can soon be found.

Byron, I think,—I do not read his verse,
But saw this in an extract—somewhere speaks,
In the Childe Harold or a poem worse,
Of certain poets that were surely freaks
Of nature, for they never rhymed nor brought
To light in any shape a single thought.

Such poets had no pressing need, I ween
Of subjects or of objects for their muse,—
No need the well-raked fields of thought to glean,
Or into withered leaves fresh life infuse.
For one and all silence they had alone,
And but for Byron they had died unknown.

If this be true—I rather doubt it though—
How grandly eloquent may often be
The poetry of silence, and the flow
Of human speech when words are still! To me
Has Nature been less partial: I must write,
Erase, rewrite, before my lines are dight.

I've ended the last stanza with a word,
A monosyllable, now obsolete,
Of which the reader may have never heard:
I tacked it on to make the rhyme complete.
“Dight to prepare” says good authority;
This bit of information I give free.

Perhaps the reader does not like my style,
Or thinks the things expressed are rather trite.
If so, please pity me before you smile;
It is no common toil for me to write:
I am no poet born; nor constant well
The founts of song like waters in the dell.

I'm working at my best ability,
And if you're wearied just upon the start,

Then put my rugged verse aside: you're free,
And so am I; and I for my own part
Will labor on, and do the best I may.
The choice is mine—I'll write for many a day.

But then I want a subject—one that's named.
'Tis hard to write without a special theme;
My Pegasus as yet has not been tamed;
And void of subject rather odd may seem
My cantos. I'll not court a silent muse.
Rather the amaranth of fame I'd lose.

Yes, I am somewhat choice about a name;
One neither very short nor very long
Will serve my purpose best. Rather too tame
Are monosyllables for stately song,
And hard to manage are long words like that
Which two lines back comes in so smooth and pat.

"There's nothing in a name," so Shakespeare said,
But I am forced to think the poet lied,
Or if you deem me by that phrase ill bred,
Please change it then to this: the point's denied.
There's magic in a name: most men are known
To reverence names more than Jehovah's throne.

There's magic in a name, and with the crowd
Name and idea, word and thing are one.
Go to the rabble, call the charm aloud;
How quickly to the potent sound they run.
Ring but the changes—every act you do
Is godlike, every lie you tell is true!

There's magic in a name: the simple sound
Of cherished ones by demagogues is used
To lead our thoughtless masses, and is found
A power for ill. Freedom is thus abused:
Thousands bewitched by this word have been known
To blast their country's welfare and their own.

There's magic in a name: go turn your eyes
To sunny France, pronounce Napoleon:*

*Written when Louis Napoleon was Emperor.

From heart to heart the thrilling echo flies
Of that by which an empire has been won!
Yes, millions by the wonder-working power
Of that great name are governed every hour.

Am I digressing from my theme? Well then,
I beg the reader's pardon,—'tis a fault
Common to all who use the tongue or pen,
And few there are that care at once to vault
Upon their topic; they must wander round,
View it askance, and map the neighboring ground.

Besides, I have not yet the subject named
Which I at starting should have had in mind;
Then, after all, let me not much be blamed;
I'll reach my text in time: so reader kind,
Bear with my past deflections, and I'll make
But few in future for the Muse's sake.

XIII. SAINT DAVID'S CHURCH.

Below me south upon a small plateau,
Sheltered by cedars and begirt with tombs,
Stands a stone house to which the people go
At stated times to worship. It assumes
Too much, I think, to call this ancient pile
A church. Such speech would force a Paul to smile.

Yet church it is in theologic phrase,
And I shall not delay to argue here
Its impropriety. In modern days
But little meaning have such terms, I fear,
And with the prejudiced, untutored mob,
To change a name is oft a bootless job.

Ho then, I have a subject! This gray house
Will do. 'Tis old, suggestive, and I think
That from its solitude not e'en a mouse
Would prove to me an unimportant link
For binding verse with verse, and giving tone
To homely poetizing like my own.

"Saint David's Church," the subject of my song,
Though who Saint David was I scarcely know,
To some old calendar he may belong,

A monk, perchance, that lived long years ago,
And saving grace, which only faith can gain,
Sought in strange words and self-inflicted pain.

And yet on second thought I can recall
That this one was the patron saint of Wales,
Who in that land of mountains outran all
His fellow pilgrims, who to him were snails,
And he a hare, unlike the fabled one,
Who sped, and slept not till the race was done.

Throughout the first and golden age of truth,
When pardon was proclaimed by heaven-sent men,
And when the Church of Christ in spotless youth
Was clothed in robes of regal beauty, then
The Christians all were saints, as we may learn
If we to some of Paul's epistles turn.

But men loved innovation; and the form,
Simple and pure, in which the gospel came
From God by inspiration, and gushed warm
From human lips touched by the heavenly flame,
Was soon corrupted; then by priests were made
Worship and creeds of every style and shade.

And sects have multiplied in Christendom
Each with a different form and dialect,
That when we try to count them and to come
At each one's doctrine, we are forced direct
To think of Babel, that most ancient town
Whose tale is in the Bible handed down.

Old Church! of fragments from the hard, dark rock
Thy massive walls were built, now hoar with time
And overrun with ivy. Thou the shock
Of eight score winters hast withstood sublime.
Time has not marred thee—he will let thee stand
For aye—thy danger is from human hand.

The spirit of conformity is rife,
And bold in these degenerate days;
The old is little reverenced, and the strife
Is for new fashions, while the simple ways
And customs that our fathers dearly prized
By supercilious upstarts are despised.

And here I see thy peril. Fane antique;
Thy simple architecture does not make
A fitting theater for those who seek
To show their gold and satin, and they'll take
Umbrage at all thy quaintness, and the smell
Of ancient timber, and—but time will tell.

Yes, time will tell thy fate, but here I say,
If poet's imprecation can avail,
The impious hand that from thy stones away
The first one tries to tear shall instant fail
Of all its ill-used strength, and palsied fall
To warn all desecrators of thy wall.

They tell us that in Queen Anne's glorious reign,
When England by repeated victories
Became the mistress of the stormy main,
And arbitress of Europe's destinies,
The Church that Harry Tudor built in state
Gave thee a service of communion plate.

They tell us, too, that in the troubled days
When our forefathers, scorning tyranny,
Began with strong and zealous hands to raise
A temple to their goddess Liberty,
The soldiers stripped thee of each window bar,
And of the lead made bullets for the war.

And Superstition has around thee thrown
The mysteries of his unearthly power,
And many a sheeted specter has been known
To haunt thy shades at midnight's silent hour,
And from their graves upraised the coffined dead
Have filled lone travellers with speechless dread.

Nor is thy name as yet unknown to song:
The bard who wrote the legend of a race
Now gone, and who will be remembered long
For graceful verse, once came and took a place
Among thy worshipers, then sang of thee
In numbers of heart-touching melody.

All this I pray, old house, may serve to keep
Thy ancient structure from the Vandal hand
Of Progress, that disturbs the quiet sleep
Of death, and overthrows throughout the land
The monuments our predecessors reared
To make their days remembered and revered.

Old Church! within thy venerable walls
What fearful struggles of the heart have been,
What wrestling of the soul with Duty's calls
To leave the paths of waywardness and sin.
Oft Truth resisted hopeless went her way
To meet the stubborn in the Judgment day.

Yet oft in tender mood she found the soul
Abased and helpless, waiting for its Lord,
Willing to yield itself to his control,
And waiting only the inviting word,
She raised the humbled ones with hand divine,
And led them forth in righteousness to shine.

O tell me not of famous victories,
Won on the bloody field of carnal strife,
Where frantic men ambitious chiefs to please,
Upon the shrinking earth pour out their life,
And bitter cries from stricken homes resound
That one vain brow with glory may be crowned.

The grandest triumphs that the earth has known,
In their results the most important far,
Where things more precious than an empire's throne
Have been the object of a desperate war,
Are those upon the heart's great battle-field
When Satan unto Christ is forced to yield.

XIV. THE CRITICS.

Thy name, O Church, may all those critics please
Who often on us luckless poets fall,
And, reckless of our protestations, seize
Our limping verses, and then furious call
The public to behold, while tooth and nail
They bite and claw us till their spirits fail.

I've small regard for critics as a class;
They are a whimsical, uncertain race,
And foolish judgments many times they pass
While sitting in their self-appointed place:
They wield their pens to eulogize or kill,
As their digestion may be good or ill.

Still with them all I here would compromise;
My verse is homely both in sense and sound;
A pleasant name to please their ears and eyes
Will prove to me no common vantage ground;
Charmed by a title they will praise indeed
The contents of a book they do not read.

So not with harsh complaining I would fall
In turn upon these often useful men.
They serve as advertisers when they call
The public eye upon us, and we then
Commit to time whatever we have done,
That wisely judges who has lost or won.

I sent some stanzas of a poem to a friend,
For his opinion of my humble muse,
That I might learn what lines I ought to mend;
Light task! Such grateful service to refuse
I never knew a critic howe'er learned,
So I had much advice posthaste returned.

In years agone this friend had greatly praised
The feeble lines my boyish fancy traced,
And now my hopes in consequence were raised

To hear again his plaudit. All misplaced
Had been my confidence, for he the plan,
Style, measure, all condemned—the fickle man!

Awhile I felt disheartened, and my muse,
With drooping wing, hid in the laurelled side
Of old Parnassus, and I thought to lose
My cherished bird, so humbled was her pride.
Next day the shock was over, and she rose
And sang defiance to all carping foes.

But wherefore, ask you, was this change of mind
In one so ready once to offer praise?
The reason here, dear reader, you will find:
I'd changed entire the fashion of my lays;
Careless of pausing at a rhyme, I'd run
The sentence onward till the thought was done.

Of course I often missed that nice effect
Which springs from pairing lines in cadence sweet,
Whose servile meaning, as we must expect,
Contracts or else expands so many feet,
That like a seesaw teeter up and down,
And please with trivial smoothness all the town.

XV. COWPER AND MILTON.

I own I do not like that kind of verse, · ·
So common in our day, in which the sound
Has little sense, or, what is tenfold worse,
In which the sheerest nonsense oft is found.
The writers think the only things required
Are vapid thoughts in jingling words attired.

Not such was thine, O Cowper, when the Task,
By gentle lips inspired, flowed from thy pen.
Thou all that taste refined should ever ask,
Or truth severe but just demand from men,
Did'st in thy clouded years, wreath into lines
Whose beauty like the golden Autumn shines.

We love to rove with thee o'er Olney's hills,
And with thy playful spirit converse hold,
We love thy song attuned to Summer rills,
Or to the breeze that sways the forest old.
Thou shonest Nature till, in sweet accord,
We join thy praises of her glorious Lord.

And while our noble English speech shall stand,
And men shall love the gentle and the pure,
Thy verses still will charm in many a land,
And thy sad story and thy fame endure.
No need of bronze or marble graved by art;
Thy name will be enshrined in many a heart.

Nor thine, O Milton, prince of epic song,
Whose daring genius, bursting every bound,
Did to the heaven of heavens her flight prolong,
And sweep the farthest realm of chaos round.
A name more lustrous or a loftier mind
Among the sons of earth we fail to find.

As one who lived before the judgment throne,
With duty thou didst measure all thy days,
Nor think to call thy matchless gifts thine own,
But used them ever to the Master's praise.
With error waging a relentless strife,
Thy noblest poem was thine earnest life.

The more we know of thee the more we love
Thy pure exalted nature. Thou no part
Hadst with ignoble aims, but raised above
The vain and fleeting, with unequalled art
Didst picture Virtue till with fond desire
To climb her flowery heights we all aspire.

Thy muse descended from the mount of song
To set thy people, soul and body, free,
And most indignant at thy country's wrong,
Her thrilling words rang out for liberty;
Till feared and hated by tyrannic crowds,
She took her wondrous flight beyond the clouds.

Thine eyes, though outwardly so fair and bright,
 Were dark within to noontide's piercing ray;
 Thy spirit, filled with Truth's eternal light,
 Shone forth resplendent as the orb of day,
 Poor, blind, forsaken, in thy latter years,
 With hope thou dwelt, apart from grief and fears.

Two densely crowded centuries have fled,
 Since thou wast given to the earth's embrace,
 And countless magnates to oblivion led,
 Who dreamed unfading bays their brows would grace;
 But thou art still beloved of deathless fame,
 That higher through the years exalts thy name.

And in the glories of that better day,
 When Truth shall reign upon the earth supreme
 No grander muse than thine shall verse essay,
 Or wed to numbers a sublimer theme:
 Calliope shall come to crown thee then,
 Great Milton, king of poets and of men.

XVI. THE GRAVEYARD.

I leave awhile the hilltop, and the long
 Declivity descending, soon I stand
 Within the ancient churchyard. Here my song
 In sadder accents on the silent land
 Shall dwell, and from the stores of memory bring
 Such thoughts of loved ones lost as here must spring.

What deep despondency fills all my soul,
 As I look round me on these numerous graves!
 Oh Death! thou end of earth, thou dreaded goal
 Of every worldly prospect, nothing saves
 Us from thy grasp, thou curse upon our race,
 For all must sink into thy cold embrace.

With terror and with loathing I must turn
 From thy corruption—all that thou hast been
 To fallen mortals, and my heart must burn
 Against thy source malignant—human sin.

What beauty poets in thy hideous mien
Have oft professed to find I have not seen.

But for the prospect of the radiant shore
That lies beyond thy dark and chilling stream,
And cheers us as we gaze the waters o'er
With faith's far-seeing eye, no one would dream
That thou hast been ordained the only way
To joys unending in the realms of day.

So after all our loathing and our dread,
We may prepare to meet thee with the trust
That thou art not eternal—that the dead
Shall yet be rescued, and from out the dust
Shall rise through Him of God and man the Son,
Who met thee in thy realm, and victory won.

Just here I see a little, grassy mound,
The resting place of some once playful child
That in the breast of mother earth has found
A refuge from the tempests dark and wild
That sweep from heaven like ministers of wrath,
And overturn our idols in their path.

How calm the loved ones sleep who pass away
Before the blush of morning leaves their sky;
They view the field of life at early day,
But ere the hour of labor comes they die;
Not theirs the weariness and burning noon,
Yet theirs the rich reward, the workman's boon.

For little children dead I would not mourn,
For my theology forbids to think
That they in dying any loss have borne
Whose innocence is the endearing link
That binds us to the angels. Each here lies,
And waits the wondrous day when all shall rise.

That day perchance is not far distant now
Which shall the wayward tribes of earth appall,
Compelling them in trembling fear to bow

To Him whose voice shall unto judgment call,
And whose loud trump shall bring from sea and land
The dead before his glorious throne to stand.

The books shall show unto the startled gaze
 Of conscience every deed of good or ill
Done in the body, in those earthly days
 When man was left to wander forth at will.
And his own way or God's to freely choose,
 And life eternal seize or else refuse.

On their dread pages secrets of the heart
 In large and flaming type will be revealed;
The motives that to character impart
 Its hue and texture will, though long concealed,
Be known to all, and judgment will be passed
 On every human action first and last.

Ah! who will pass the ordeal when the claim
 Of justice and the curses of the law are known?
When every evil impulse, every deed of shame
 Demands a life before the great, white Throne?
The soul that sinneth it shall surely die
 Will be the verdict of both earth and sky.

The book of life will then be opened too,
 Disclosing names of those that shelter sought
Beneath the banner of the conquering Jew,
 Who for the humble great deliverance wrought,
And o'er the powers of darkness victory won,
 Showing himself God's well beloved Son.

But now I stand beside another grave;
 The crumbling form within it once I knew,—
My favorite pupil, E. S. P.—I gave
 Her lessons daily, and her young mind grew
Under my teaching, and her gentle ways
 And purity of heart I loved to praise.

Alas! that she should perish in her youth
 Just blooming into grace and womanhood

I cannot realize the bitter truth
That she is gone forever, and I would,
If possible, it were a gloomy thought
That fancy in some troubled dream had brought.

Oh! sweetly, sweetly sleep, dear E. S. P.,
No common tributes to thy worth belong,
The fragrance of thy saintly memory
Gives value even to my humble song.
Yes, sleep, but not for aye—thine eyes at last
Shall greet the dawn with joy that night is past.

Yes, sweetly, sweetly sleep, dear E. S. P.,
Till breaks the morning of eternal day.
The Christ thou loved and worshiped sent for thee,
For his own angels bore thy soul away.
Yes, sleep, and when the night of death is o'er,
Thou'l wake immortal on the sinless shore.

They sleep, these buried forms, but do they dream?
Do visions trouble them where they are laid?
The phantoms of the brain—the things that seem
So real, yet are but a flitting shade,—
Come these to bless or mar their slumbers deep,
Or lie the dead unconsciously asleep?

Or can it be, as scientists have taught,
All is mere matter and persistent force,
The last producing motion, life and thought,
And urging forward in relentless course,
Makes to unmake, nor leaves a trace behind
Of all that formed the structure of the mind?

O problems that so vex the darkened soul!
I bowed before you once in silent awe;
But faith has opened wide your mystic scroll,
Revealing life through God's unchanging law:
To live and reign forever is for man
Attainable by His most gracious plan.

XVII. THE WORLD UNSEEN.

We look upon the mansions of the dead,
And think how little is the joy of earth,
How dreary is the pilgrimage we've led—
A tearful journey from the hour of birth,—
And thinking thus, we feel what sweet relief
To lay life's burden down, and end our grief.

The tomb to mortal eyes shuts out all pain
And sorrow, stops the long and bitter strife
Of man with man in which our hatreds reign
Over our good emotions, and of life
Ends every struggle: O what glad release
To enter death that promises such peace!

But is it such? and is the unseen world
To which the spirit flies a quiet spot?
Are all the banners of contention furled,
And gains the inner man a happier lot
When drops the fleshly robe? Ah, who can solve
These questions which our destinies involve?

How strange that with the Bible in their hands,
Believers have false notions of the dead,
Or that the foolish whims of pagan lands
Should find a lodgment in the Christian's head.
Yet few on this great theme, and more as well,
The doctrine taught in Holy Writ can tell.

Some say the good when dead to heaven hie,
There to remain till judgment calls them thence,
The wicked likewise to their torment fly
When they from earthly scenes depart, and hence
They would consign each soul to bliss or woe
Before the judgment comes its fate to show.

Again, of purgatory we are told,
Where tainted souls by searching flames are tried,
And tickets of release on earth are sold

For those from sin thus fully purified:
A few who here their penance underwent
Escape the fire, and straight to heaven are sent.

Others, who've borrowed largely from the Greeks,
Talk wildly of an unseen world of spheres,
Where every disembodied spirit seeks
Its like, and, with a last adieu to fears,
Starts upward on a grand progressive race,
Still reaching higher scenes and richer grace.

We hide the body underneath the sod,
For "dust to dust" is still the stern decree,
The spirit goes unto its Maker, God,
To learn of him its final destiny;
But God is everywhere: in deepest space,
As in the highest heaven, he has his place.

Deprived of instruments for working ill,
The spirit can transgress the law no more,
Nor show the workings of perverted will,
And pleasure find in evil as of yore;
Thus dead to sin it may be truly called,
Yet in its dire results remain enthralled.

Men talk much of the body's bent for sin,
And to its charge they lay our every ill,
And hold that when they leave it they shall win
Eternal joy, and drink their constant fill.
But stop, vain babblers, you should know
It is the spirit not the clay that makes our woe.

Whose are the appetites, the lust, the pride,
The vanity, the hatred, and the wrath,
The fell ambition that o'er all would ride,
Crushing the bleeding millions in its path?
Say, whose are these? They must, 'tis plain,
To spirit, not to matter, all pertain.

Now when the former leaves its earthly frame,
Does it divest itself of every taint

And wayward motion? Can we rightly claim
A sudden transformation and restraint
From evil, that the soul may take her flight
And with the angels dwell in pure delight?

Upon the negative and asking proof,
I take my stand. Such sudden change, I hold,
Has no analogy in warp or woof
Of universal nature. 'Tis a bold
Assumption that would give perpetual lease
To wickedness, and bid repentance cease.

The growth of character is slow through years
Of watchful care and rigid discipline,
And trials oft and many bitter tears
Are needed to complete the cure of sin,
And patience too, must have her work expressed
Before the saint is fit to enter rest.

The facts show plainly that a sudden change
Of moral nature is unknown to man,
That all transforming done within the range
Of this life goes upon the gradual plan.
Think you that for the soul there intervenes
A miracle to fit for heavenly scenes?

But of such miracle what proof have we
In reason or in revelation? None!
When from the clay the spirit struggles free,
The impress deep of every action done
Remains upon it, gives it form, and sets
It in its place in spite of all regrets.

So when it passes to the vast Unseen,
Gehenna called and Paradise as well,
Or Hades, with the gulf that lies between,
In comfort it abides, or else in hell.
Just as it chose on earth its fate will be
By judgment fixed for all eternity.

Upon the basis, then, of character
Is placed the destiny of every soul;

This solemn thought from evil should deter,
And bring our passions under strict control.
All sin results in wretchedness, and well
We know how wicked souls can make a hell.

Freed from the body and from every law
That man binds on his fellows, closely brought
From different climes and ages, with no awe
Of virtue, it would baffle all our thought
To show the misery of such a mass:
Hyperbole the scene could scarce surpass.

A truce to argument, for nought we know,
Save what the One Book tells us, of the land
Of night and silence towards which we go;
And when the bark of life lies on its strand,
We there await the dawning, and the hour
When Christ, descending, re-asserts his power.

In vain we seek to pierce the mystic gloom
That hides from mortal sight the spirit land,
Or summon from the cloisters of the tomb
A single soul of all that countless band
Of earthly pilgrims who unwilling sped
To seek the shadowy kingdom of the dead.

XVIII. M. J. B.

I turn to yonder tombstone where a cross
Sculptured upon the snowy marble shows
The symbol of a hope linked with a loss.
The form that lies beneath it, like a rose
Cut down by frost untimely, once did live,
And proofs abundant of rich thought did give.
The best endowed of Radnor's daughters, she,
In mind and heart, and in the skill to tell
In prose or rhyme the things we wish to be;
I loved her fondly, for I knew her well,
And first discerned in her young, ardent soul
The buds of genius and of self-control.

She was my pupil, and became my friend,
Confiding to me what she hoped and feared,
Till with our plans romance began to blend,
And made us each to each the more endeared,
While ere we knew it Love had bound us fast
With silken ties that often life outlast.

Still, friends we deemed each other, and we thought
The hours were heavenly, as in converse sweet,
We found the pleasure that, so often sought,
Comes not, and then we wondered why so fleet
Time was when we would have him lag behind,
And never to his flight were we resigned.

We wandered oft together, and the way
Seemed strewn with fairest flowers of spring;
Beneath was beauty, overhead, the day
Shone brightly, and each living, moving thing
Seemed to partake of that pure happiness
Which came our hearts in unison to bless.

Her girlish innocence and simple trust,
Conjoined with courage, and a clear, strong mind
First won my confidence, as ever must
Such precious traits the honest-hearted bind.
We nearer grew, until there came a day
When one from other naught could tear away.

I've sung the meadow and the lonely wood,
The scene of early rambles when my heart
Loved nature more and her deep solitude,
And I have pictured with my feeble art
The beauties that I there so oft beheld
Admiringly in palmy days of eld.

In later years I wandered there again,
With her who had become my light and joy,
In Summer, and in dreamy Autumn, when
Life seemed a cup of bliss without alloy,
And hand in hand beside the stream and wood,
We aimless roved, rejoicing in our good.

A penciled paper with a flower enclosed,
A spray of goldenrod now pale and dry,
I lately found. The few faint words disclosed
A world of meaning as they met mine eye.
They were but "From our Meadow," and recalled
The golden hours when Love our hearts enthralled.

And she who plucked the flower and wrote the phrase
No longer lives. The faded blossom soon became
An emblem of her few and fleeting days,
For she too, drooped, nor could resist the claim
Of fell decay upon her, and she died,
So closely was she to the flowers allied.

Alas! O Rose of Radnor, loved and lost!
Soon wast thou borne into the Silent Land,
While I am still upon the billows tossed,
Beneath dark clouds that hide the sunny strand
Of that sweet Isle for which our spirits yearned,
As from the cold, dull Now they weary turned.

I would that thou wert here beside me now,
This day of sunshine and of perfect peace;
I fain would gaze upon thy spotless brow,
And into thy brown eyes in their release
From sorrow's tears and from the chilling frown
Of adverse fortune that soon cast thee down.

Oft times when I am sad, I take the store
Of thy dear letters, which I sacred keep,
And, opening the packets, read them o'er;
Then the long buried years awake from sleep,
And I am young again, and thou art mine,
And love and hope once more our lives entwine.

How precious are these relics of the past,
Written in all the glow of youthfulness,
Full of a zeal we dreamed would ever last,
And of a faith that would not fail to bless
Our lives with full fruition void of change,
As in the golden future we should range.

We thought to make a paradise below,
And of rough stone a fairy palace build,
On earth's dry sands Edenic flowers to grow,
And mold life's ideal with our hands unskilled.
Thus by our dreams deceived, we took our way
Towards the portals of the setting day.

Alas! we thought not of the toil and cares
That lay before us, and the world's contempt
For all our aspirations, and the snares
That oft beset our pathway; nor exempt
Were we from selfishness, sweet love's dire foe,
That chills its founts and stops its generous flow.

We stood together in the market places where
All worth is measured by the coin it brings,
And faith and conscience, soiled by traffic, share
The price and fate of gross and common things.
The wares we had to sell were not of gold,
Nor even gilt, so they remained unsold.

But all is over now, and thou, dear one,
Art resting from the weariness of earth.
God grant that when the long, long night is done,
Thou'l waken joyous to immortal birth,
And see the golden age and happy Isle
We longed for when we loved and dreamed the while.

XIX. TRUTH.

I turn from grief and tears, and climb the hill
Once more, to feast upon the light and air
Of this rare day in Autumn, and to fill
My mind with flowers of memory ever fair,
And redolent with odors of life's spring,
When hope and fancy roved with tireless wing.

In childhood's years how many sports were mine,
Whose harmless pleasure never seemed to pall;
The jealous rival ready to malign,
The vengeful bigot with his heart of gall,

The false companion eager to betray,
Were then unknown—would that they were to-day!

And yet the ways of Providence, not ours, are best,
Unwilling though we are to walk therein;

Through trials and reverses we are blest,

And through defeats life's battle we must win.

Hard lot! the unbelieving heart replies.

Yes, hard to him who not on Christ relies.

We ne'er achieve the poems we have planned,

Nor frame in deeds the pictures of the mind;

Our best performances imperfect stand,

And often worthless, as we sadly find;

Yet not for this should we a moment dare

To murmur, or of better things despair.

For confident am I that Truth will win,

In the great outcome of the world's affairs,

The victory over ignorance and sin,

And give to him who in reverses dares

To stand beside her the unfading crown

Of righteousness and heaven's bright renown.

The best philosophy of life, I think,

Is that which turns us to the present good,

Gives us the cup of blessing now to drink,

Leads us to grasp the known and understood.

The past is fixed, the future is not ours,

Our life is now; let this employ our powers.

Upon the rock of Truth unchanging build

A lasting hope for all your future joys,

Conform your life to what the Lord has willed,

Avoid the petty strife and learned noise

Of wranglers, and the speculations vain

Of mystics who by dreams would heaven gain.

But what is TRUTH? This question was proposed

By Pilate to the Man Divine who wore

Our crown of sorrows, and sweet heaven unclosed

To mortals. He the query then forbore

To answer: Pilate asked it with a sneer,
And Truth is worthless to the insincere.

But to his own the Wondrous One declared,
I am the Truth, and all must come to me
That would her lessons learn; and none have dared
To call in question or deny what he
Has said, or, daring, pointed out a trait
In Christ our Lord where Truth dwells not in state.

It is a fact that Christ is everywhere,
In the broad country and the crowded street,
Wherever is a heart that loves him, there
He comes to dwell with every blessing meet
For life and holiness and perfect peace,
And gives from care and fear a sweet release.

The revelation of his righteous will,
Made by the promised Paraclete that came
Forever to abide, is with us still,
Through all the centuries it is the same
Unchanging Truth that points the only way
To Joy's bright home and Heaven's eternal day.

And all our life is waste that is not spent
In knowing Him, the Christ who all things knew,
And showing in ourselves the knowledge lent
To teach our fellows by the works we do.
Of all ambitions this is surely best—
To have in word and deed our Christ confessed.

And in this hour of retrospection, glad,
Right glad am I that Truth has ever been
My chief delight, that I have never bade
To her known foes a welcome, nor within
My inner heart a dwelling place allowed
For one of Falsehood's coarse and motley crowd.

Yet little have I learned and less have done,
Nor would I dare to play the Pharisee,
And boast as if the crown of life were won,

And mine the honor of the victory.
We nothing have save what the Lord bestows,
As every child of his with gladness knows.

The heart that now remembers Him in love,
The soul that joys in this unclouded day,
The wish that grasps the precious things above,
The grace and mercy of my God display;
For all are his own workmanship, not mine,
Wrought through his Christ, the Source of Truth divine.

XX. MOUNT PLEASANT.

As here I muse this morn, I seem again
A pupil of the old Mount Pleasant school,
I sit before my desk with book and pen,
I yield once more to Aiken's gentle rule.
O what familiar faces gather round,
What well-known voices through the room resound.

The desks are hacked and carved with Barlow knives
In hands of budding Bewicks deftly plied,
To win a humble place in Fame's archives
For bold initials, each its owner's pride,
While on the benches, walls, and paintless door
Is many a name remembered now no more.

Again I open Pike to do his "sums,"
And solve the mysteries of "Rule of Three,"
Again I read in Frost, and hear the drums
From battle fields urge on to victory;
While all around, by work or idleness
The boys and girls their characters express.

There sits pale Alice conning o'er a page
Of Comly's Speller with a weary look,
The definitions every thought engage,
Her eyes alternate rest on wall and book;
Beside me is her brother slate in hand,
The leading spirit of our playful band.

There, too, is Buzby, whom in cruel jest,
I likened to a greedy bird of prey:
Of righteous indignation full possessed,
He vowed most dire revenge the coming day:
But on the morrow other thoughts engaged,
And so the threatened war was never waged.

And there is Emily the beautiful and wild,
Who many a young heart to romance allured:
Her books unnoticed lie before the child,
For when was study patiently endured
By her who gloried in the prettiest face,
And reigned acknowledged belle in any place?

And young Achilles, who with me had sought
For buried treasure which we fancied hid
By some freebooter who his gold had brought
When he from far had sailed with Captain Kidd.
We toiled two hours or more, but nothing found,
Save blistered hands, in turning up the ground.

And Barbara, whom I would stop to praise:
Artless, with kindness beaming in thine eyes,
And goodness showing forth in all thy ways,
How few there were who knew thy worth to prize;
Yet these have held thee in remembrance dear
And blessed thee, child, through many a checkered year

Our teacher, too, whom we "The Master" call
Is now beside me on the platform seat;
Upon his desk he lets his ferule fall,
To make impressive what his lips repeat;
And now he turns to me with accents kind,
The honest trainer of my growing mind.

The time slips by—we read and write and spell,
With interruptions made by naughty boys,
Whose punishment with rod, inflicted well,
Fills all the room with penitential noise,
For in those days of strength no birchless grace
Of Solomon's advice usurped the place.

Yes, there they are! and I'm a boy once more,
With all that boyish hopefulness can bring.
Recess comes on, we struggle through the door,
We run, we shout till hill and valley ring;
Then, choosing plays, in separate groups we go,
With bounding steps, and bosoms all aglow.

The vision fades—these young and agile forms,
Alas! have vanished far beyond recall;
Some, safe from later life's relentless storms,
Sleep in the quiet grave, which waits us all;
And some still live, yet changed in all but name,
They and their former selves are not the same.

Where Alice is I know not; but I learned
In after years her brother early wed
A stranger, and his daring footsteps turned
With her to the Great West where sunset red,
Dyes the Pacific wave that breaks upon
The verdant shores of wood-crowned Oregon.

And Emily? To her with woman's years
Came woman's cares and all the weary moil
Of household duties, not unmixed with tears,
Within a home upon a sterile soil.
Her beauty, which a palace would have graced,
By anxious labor early was effaced.

They had their dreams no doubt, and painted bright
The scenes before them, restless for the time
When they should leave behind and out of sight
All discontentment, and should joyous climb
The flowery slopes that to their childish eyes
Seemed ever near in loveliness to rise.

XXI. CONCLUSION.

Ah, change has troubled thee, my natal ground,
And marred thy rustic beauty to my view,
Large mansions of the Queen Anne type are found
Where elderberry and sweetbrier grew.

And city fashions banish rural ways
And simple customs of our early days.

The school-house, though, like this old church survives,
For time allows to men's achievements many a year
Beyond the measure of their own frail lives,
And gives to walls renown when disappear
The names the builders vainly hoped would stand
Upon the scroll of Fame in many a land.

The sun is higher as the hours have sped,
And I reluctant turn my steps away
From old St. David's, Radnor and the dead,
And end my musings and my homely lay;
Yet a few words of parting are but meet,
Ere busy scenes of life again I greet.

O woods and fields, where I in childhood played,
I bid you now perhaps a last farewell;
Ye well known spots, where oft my footsteps strayed
Upon the hill or in the shady dell,
Linked with bright days and to my heart endeared,
I'll see you still as you of old appeared.

And in that wondrous realm which hidden lies
Beyond life's sunset in the unknown west
Are fairer landscapes under lovelier skies,
Where cloud and tempest never more molest,
And where at last Hope's wildest, sweetest dreams,
Will come to pass by Eden's flowery streams.

LILLY.

Thou Lilly of my early years,
Sweet maiden loved when I was young,
I see thee now through mem'ry's tears,
And speak thy name with falt'ring tongue.

I know how greatly thou art changed,
How strangely time has dealt with thee,
Since thou and I together ranged
The fields of youth and poesy.

I know our sweet romance has fled
To seek the shades of Nevermore,
I know the flowers of love are dead,
And all our cherished dreams are o'er.

I know that thou hast ceased to be
My Lilly gay and young and fair,
With voice of richest melody,
And eye of light beyond compare.

No, thou to me art nothing now
More than the scores I daily meet,
Whom with a word or smile or bow,
In kindly courtesy I greet.

Yet I for this no longer care,
For in the bygone lives my joy,
And my accustomed heart can bear
Each pang that does not quite destroy.

My joy is in the golden hours
That brought our paths of life so near,
My grief has wasted all its powers,
And left me nothing more to fear.

O never was a love more pure,
Than that which linked our souls in one;
Alas! that it could not endure
Until the course of life was run.

From stain of passion was it free,
 Or gold, or fame, or pride of birth;
 It lived in its own ecstasy,
 A thing of beauty not of earth.

I still behold thee as of old,
 Unrivalled in thy virgin grace,
 In reverie thy hand I hold,
 And gaze into thy love-lit face.

It is the Lilly of the past
 That comes to cheer each lonely hour,
 And seems again her spell to cast
 Around me with its ancient power.

And as the Lilly of the past,
 I evermore would think of thee,
 Bright reminiscence that shall last
 Till life itself shall cease to be!

TREDYFFRIN.

Tredyffrin, O Tredyffrin,
 How oft I think of thee!
 Thy hills and glens romantic
 I long again to see.
 The sunny years of boyhood
 That like a dream have flown,
 Were passed beside thy valley
 So dear to Memory grown.

The thoughts that brightly cluster
 Around my early days
 Demand for thee, Tredyffrin,
 The tribute of my praise.

There is no place so lovely
As that where we were reared,
And all revere the humblest
Their childhood has endeared.

Its scenes however lowly
Our heart-strings twine around
And, by remembrance hallowed,
Each spot is sacred ground;
Portrayed in Fancy's colors
They're with us everywhere
And nothing else of beauty
Seems to us half so fair.

But thee I need not flatter
With Fancy's gaudy dyes,
For thousands know what beauties
Are found beneath thy skies,—
The beauties of thy summers,
The glories of thy springs,
The visions of enchantment
Which dreamy autumn brings.

No days were e'er so happy
As those when I, a boy,
Upon thy hill-tops lingered
Thy landscapes to enjoy,
With book and busy pencil
I whiled the hours away,
Until the dewy twilight
Had closed the halcyon day.

Thy groves of oak and chestnut
Were ever my delight
In spring, or gloomy winter,
Or in the summer bright;
Thy shady dells and streamlets,
Thy rocky slopes so wild,
To me became familiar
When I was but a child.

Upon thy hills I cherished
 Sweet dreams which still remain
 Like stars amid the darkness
 When gloomy thoughts enchain;
 Sweet dreams which Time's reverses
 Seek vainly to destroy
 But which reviving ever
 Bring back my hope and joy.

And I drank in thy spirit,
 Thy spirit wild and free,
 Until my own with longing
 Grew restless as the sea;
 Then, leaving thee, I wandered,
 Yet everywhere I roam
 My heart in fondness lingers
 Within my early home.

Tredyffrin, O Tredyffrin,
 When life shall reach its close
 I'd rest within thy bosom
 In undisturbed repose—
 Rest in thy ancient valley
 Wherein my kindred lie,
 Till Joy's eternal morning
 Illumes our darkened sky!

QUERIES.

Say, shall I leave unsung
 What dreary years have flown,
 How sad my life has grown,
 Since thou and I were young?

Our paths, just then begun,—
 How very near they came!
 Say, was our wish the same,
 That ever thus they'd run?

I never knew thy heart,
Yet sometimes dared to think
That love our lives would link
So fast we'd never part.

For often in thine eye,
That hazel eye so bright,
A softer, sweeter light
Appeared when I was by.

It was a foolish thought,
Yet gave a greater joy
To me, a timid boy,
Than later years have brought.

Did memory hold me dear
When no more side by side,
But separating wide
We sought the world so drear?

And on thy lonely way,
Like mine, was thy young breast
Filled with a strange unrest
Through many a weary day?

Alas! thou'l ne'er reply
'Till in the angels' land
I take thee by the hand
Where love shall never die.

TOO LATE.

I've met thee day by day,
And known thy gentle ways,
And seen thy blushes play
At times beneath my gaze.

My heart I cannot trust
To linger with thee more,

But leave thee now I must,—
Why did I not before?

Too late, alas, we've met
To wear love's gilded chain,
And only vain regret
Can in our bosoms reign.

Had we each other known
In the dim long ago,
We might perchance have grown
Too fond of earth below.

This world was never made
The home of happiness,
Its day-dreams quickly fade,
And sorrows all oppress.

We seize the cup of joy—
How soon 'tis snatched away!
Our gold is but alloy,
Our life is but decay.

Together oft we strayed
Through summer's leafy vales,
But now her blossoms fade
In autumn's chilling gales.

Together oft we heard
The robin pour his lay,
But now each tuneful bird
In silence flies away.

No fitter time we'll find
Our final leave to take;
Delays but stronger bind
The ties that we must break.

'Twill be a moment's pain—
Why should it longer last?
And firmly we'll refrain
From dwelling on the past.

Then, dear one, fare thee well,
I should have gone before,
These tears my sorrow tell,
But we must meet no more.

DEATH.

Now from the autumn sky,
Now from the fading year,
Looks forth the mystery
Our souls so greatly fear.

It whispers in the breeze,
It murmurs in the rill,
It rustles in the leaves,
And echoes from the hill.

Oh, Death! thou wondrous power,
Transforming all below,
Why should we dread the hour
That will thy secrets show.

Thou art the angel sent
To save, and not destroy,
To free the captives pent,
And lift the gates of joy.

Through thee our Christ has passed
To mount his priestly throne,
To reign until at last
He comes to call his own.

Then from thine icy reign,
Out of thy loathsome tomb,
His loved ones shall regain
Primeval Eden's bloom.

GOOD NIGHT.

She came to me so softly,
Her blue eyes beaming bright,
She took my hand so gently,
And sweetly said, "Good night."

She seemed as I beheld her,
And clasped her little hand,
A vision of the beauty
Found in the angels' land.

As softly then she left me,
And soon was lost to sight,
But in my memory lingered
That gently-breathed "Good night."

When next I saw my darling,
Her cheek had lost its bloom,
And she was slowly sinking
Down to the silent tomb.

Her eyes were sunk and mournful,
They beamed no longer bright,
Yet sweetly then as ever
She bade her last "Good night."

Ah! many a bitter tear-drop
I shed at parting then:
I knew that I would never
Behold her face again.

MY HEAVENLY Father gives me bread
Through toil which he has daily blessed.
Why should I covet gold instead,
Or with ambition break my rest?

JUNE.

O June, rare June,
Thou fairest daughter of the year,
Thou comest with the summer moon,
And bringest beauty for the eye and ear.

Long, long ago
I thought of thee with tenderness
Greater than lovers fond bestow,
Or maidens to their chosen ones confess.

And in thy smile
My youthful heart was ever gay,
And days sped swift as moments, while
Thy reign of one sweet month seemed but a day.

And why not now?
Thy deep blue eyes are just as bright
As lovely thine unwrinkled brow
As when they charmed my childhood's eager sight.

Thou hast not changed,
But I, alas! am not the same:
Life's cares have so my heart estranged
That thou, O June, seemst but an empty name.

And yet I know
Thou shouldst be still a welcome guest:
Thou art a visitant below
From that unclouded realm where dwell the blest.

And when I come
To that fair land, O let me share
The pleasures of thy blissful home,
And on my brow thy fadeless roses wear!

ENLIGHTENED.

I ask not wealth, I ask not fame:
An envied heap of yellow earth,
The tiresome echo of a name,—
Such things to me are nothing worth.

To live a life of poverty,
To perish, to the world unknown,
Were one time dreary thoughts to me,
Not now, for I have wiser grown.

The spirit of the Nazarene
Has filled me with its wondrous light,
And things long hidden I have seen:
I walk no longer in the night.

This perishable life must fly,
The life beyond it will endure,
As clouds evanish from the sky,
And leave the heavens serene and pure.

A PRAYER.

O Blessed One, whose voice divine
Comes through the ages to mine ear,
Assuring me that I am Thine,
And freeing me from every fear,—
Transformed by truth and love I'd be
And made in mind and life like Thee.

Within my heart O condescend
To enter, Lord, and there abide,
That all my thoughts with thine may blend,
And seek no fellowship beside;
For Thou art endless joy to those
Whose faith and hope in Thee repose.

DAYDREAMS.

I would not dream this precious life away,
 Delightful as my idle musings are,
But rouse me to the labor of the day,
 And follow duty as my guiding star.

These reveries in which our fancy soars,
 And builds her palaces upon the clouds,
Make us disdainful of these lower shores
 Where humble toilers move in weary crowds.

I would not lose my sympathy for man,
 Nor love him less for all the faults he shows,
But cherish all the tenderness I can
 For them in whom life's common current flows.

I would not dream, but work till day has fled,
 And He who hires and watches calls me home;
Then in the mansions of the blessed dead,
 Far sweeter rest and brighter dreams will come.

MARY.

When Cynthia o'er the folded flowers,
 Has spread her vail of silver light,
And sleep enchains the silent hours
 That cluster round the noon of night,
My fancy seeks the mystic streams
That murmur through the land of dreams.

'Tis there I meet the loved and lost,
 Whose forms are seen on earth no more,
But who the sombre waves have crossed,
 And gained the farther, better shore;

Where pleasure is a constant guest,
And weary pilgrims are at rest.

And thee, dear Mary, there I meet,
Whom by Owasco's stream I knew,
With sunny face and smile so sweet,
And eyes that beamed with friendship true,
Now brighter grown, escaped the shades
Where sorrow reigns, and beauty fades.

Thy gentle form is now arrayed
In robes like those the angels wear,
Far richer than the garments made
For that June day with loving care,
When orange blossoms graced thy brow,
Meet emblems of thy marriage vow.

Sometimes a look of sadness comes,
And dims the glory round thy head;
Thou thinkest of the darkened homes,
Where bitter tears for thee are shed,—
Where husband, mother, sisters, weep,
And memory's sacred vigil keep.

Oh! Mary, though our hearts must bleed,
To know that thou art here no more,
We would not wish thee back, indeed,
From that unfading, sinless shore:
No, let us sad but patient wait,
Till we, too, pass through heaven's gate.

AT EVEN.

At even when the twilight steals
Adown the western sky,
And night with trailing robe conceals
The landscape from the eye,

I set me down within my room,
A lonely, saddened man,
I set me down within the gloom,
To muse and idly plan.

Then comes to me from out the past
A voice that's sweet and low,
Whose gentle tones still o'er me cast
The spell of long ago:
It is the voice of one now dead
Whose presence was my joy
When girlhood's ringlets graced her head,
And I was but a boy.

It tells me of the golden years
That rolled so swiftly by,
When our young eyes were free from tears,
And our young hearts beat high,
When over all our coming days
Hope set a radiant bow,
And every scene that met our gaze
Appeared in beauty's glow.

O voice! whose echoes faintly sound
From out the realm of shade,
I weep to think of that green mound
Which over her was made,
Whose dear lips formed thee all thou art,
O voice so sweet and low,
And filled with melody my heart
In evenings long ago.

The wintry winds now wildly sweep
Around her lonely tomb,
And I who live to think and weep,
Could wish to share its gloom!
O voice, sweet voice, thou bid'st me come
Where teardrops fall no more,
Where weary pilgrims find a home
On God's eternal shore.

THE GLASS OF FAITH.

Why waitest thou, O Soul,
Beside this sea unknown?
I watch the billows roll,
And hear the breakers moan.

Dost thou no objects see,
No distant land descry?
Nothing appears to me
Except the waste and sky.

No voices reach thine ear,
No whispers from the deep?
Nothing at all I hear:
The loved are all asleep.

Asleep? Then in the morn
Thou'l greet them when they wake.
Alas! men say in scorn,
“The morn will never break.”

Hast thou forgot thy glass,
As thou dost here despond?
Ah, now the shadows pass!
I see the shore beyond;
I see the dead arise,
My cherished dead, and thine:
They meet Him in the skies,
The Christ of Palestine.

WHEN I AM GONE.

The flowers in spring will bloom anew,
And birds will trill their song,
And groves put on their vernal hue,
And brooks will dance along;
The sun his burning rays will send
From out the summer sky,
And weary ones in toil will bend,
When I in death shall lie.

Yes, seasons still will come and go,
When I am passed away,
And bosoms still with joy will glow,
Or shrink from sorrow's sway;
The restless world will hurry on
As eager as before,
Nor stop to think of him that's gone,
Nor miss the life that's o'er.

What am I to the countless race?
A bubble on the main!
Another soon will take my place,
And what the loss or gain?—
I would not think in foolish pride
The world depends on me,
For I must sink beneath the tide
That swells oblivion's sea.

ACROSS THE STREAM.

The boatman crosses the waveless stream,
I hear the dip of his muffled oar,
And through the twilight there faintly gleam
The spectral lights on the farther shore.

I watch the rower whose strength and skill
 Inspire the oars in their rapid play,
 I see the waters so deep and chill,
 Part right and left as the boat makes way.

This time he crosses, I know for me,
 As he has done for the myriads gone;
 The darkness deepens, and soon I'll be
 Within the gloom that precedes the dawn.

The boat I enter, my lips are dumb,—
 Oh, heart, lone heart, in thy silence pray!—
 Over at last!—and the morn has come
 That ushers in the unfading day.

A city builded of crystal gold,
 Makes glad my sight in the morning beam,
 An endless life with its joys untold,
 Is now my portion across the stream.

THE ARBUTUS.

O beauteous child of the forest,
 Thou lovest the wild, rocky hills,
 Avoiding the low, grassy meadows,
 And babble of fountains and rills;
 Yet vainly for hours have I wandered,
 On slopes where I formerly found
 Thy clusters of snow-white and crimson
 Abundantly scattered around.

Oft ere the last snow of the winter
 Had melted within the ravine,
 Or squirrel had peeped from his covert,
 Thy petals unfolding I've seen;
 But now though the sun is resplendent,
 And March is as meek as a lamb,
 Thy buds are still locked in the calyx
 In spite of the sunshine and calm.

I wonder not, though disappointed,
For often our friends do we see,
When we in Hope's spring would be joyous
Retiring and selfish like thee.
No doubt in the garland of April
Thy blossoming spray will be twined,
And then if I seek thee, Arbutus,
Thy blushes of shame I shall find.

SEMPER ORA.

When Aurora's glories bright
Cover all the eastern skies,
And her robe of golden light
O'er the wakened landscape lies,
Cast away each earthly feeling,
Bid thy thoughts to heaven ascend,
And, in secret lowly kneeling,
Let thy prayers and praises blend.

Through the cares and toil of day,
Still forget not God is nigh,
Let thy heart in silence pray,
As thy moments onward fly.

And when evening's quiet hours,
Stealing past with sombre mien,
Scatter o'er the sleeping flowers
Countless drops of dewy sheen,
Cast away each earthly feeling,
Bid thy thoughts to heaven ascend,
And, in secret humbly kneeling,
Let thy prayers and praises blend.

[The following verses were suggested by the words of G. Anna Shaw, who, a few minutes before her death, exclaimed, "Look, father, see the angels!" — L. F. B.]

Look, dear father, see the angels,
 As around me now they glide!
 They have come, I know, to guide me
 Through the Jordan's rolling tide.
 See you not their golden tresses,
 And their trailing robes of snow?
 Hear you not their rustling pinions
 And their voices sweet and low?

O the angels, blessed angels,
 Lovely as the morning star!
 They have come, I know, to lead me
 To the land that lies afar.

I can see them bending o'er me,
 Feel them touch my pallid brow,
 As the border land I enter,
 And at Jordan's brink I bow.
 Soon they'll lead me to my Savior,
 Soon I'll clasp His loving hand,
 Then from every care and sorrow
 Safe, I'll rest in Canaan's land.

O the angels, blessed angels,
 Lovely as the morning star!
 They have come, I know, to lead me
 To the rest that lies afar.

Fare ye well, dear father, mother!
 When I reach the sinless shore,
 I will watch beside the river,
 Till the angels bring you o'er;

I will be the first to greet you,
When you touch the blooming strand,
I will be the first to welcome,
When you reach the heavenly land.

O the angels, blessed angels,
Lovely as the morning star!
They will come, I know, to lead you,
To the land that lies afar.

TO J. H. B.

Dear Dingle, friend of younger days,
Whom always I delight to praise,
Be kindly patient while I write,
A letter short in verses trite.

Though oft the music of my lyre
Be void of all poetic fire,
Indulgent think a friend sincere
Has placed each line in order here.

How many years from us have flown,
How many changes we have known,
Since first by Susquehanna's stream,
We met in April's summer dream!

Then Spring had chased the snows away,
That o'er the land had held their sway,
And Flora in her playful mood,
Strewed blossoms over field and wood.

Then merry birds on every tree,
Moved all the air with minstrelsy,
Till every heart with music thrilled
And every soul with joy was filled.

In fair Lock Haven first we met,
That on the river's bank is set,

Like pensive maiden come to dream
The hours away beside the stream.

But that bright morn I little thought
How soon by thee I should be brought
To know the Wondrous One whose love
Allures to brighter scenes above.

Yet so it proved and often now
In solitude I humbly bow,
And praise the grace that turned our feet,
And caused our paths of life to meet.

O, may that grace still with us be,
And deepen still our sympathy,
Till we shall reach the rest above,
Where friendship ends in perfect love!

TO M. P. D.

(For a Bouquet.)

Pretty blossoms, pretty blossoms,
Fashioned by the dimpled Spring!
Tints of yellow, snow and purple,
Bright as rubies glistening.

Like these gentle blooms of Flora,
Lovely in their purity,
Source of joy to all around thee,
May thy words and actions be.

TO B. C.

I saw thy dear face bathed in tears,
The time thy sainted mother died,
When o'er the path of thy young years,
Came sorrow's overwhelming tide;
I saw thee, but said nothing then,
Nor tried to soothe thy rending grief,
For how, alas, could tongue or pen
To pain like thine have brought relief?

Yet deeply did I pity thee,
And often in my heart I prayed,
That Heaven's more potent sympathy
Would lift the burden on thee laid,
And to thee grant the peace of Him
Who gave his life for all in tears
That raise their eyes with sorrow dim,
And consecrate to him their years.

I knew not thou hadst never turned
In sweet obedience to His word,
Nor felt the love that oft has burned,
Since thou the voice of mercy heard;
I knew not,—but the answer came,
For thou wast led to His dear cross,
To take upon thee His high name,
Without which all is hopeless loss.

O let the memory of the dead
Incite thee to a holy life,
And cheerful light around thee shed,
Amid the world's unceasing strife,
And lead thee upward in the way
That all the good and true have gone,
Till thou shalt greet the brighter day
That shines the domes of heaven upon!

TO B. B.

Oft have I read thy dreamy lays,
And ever have they called to mind
The summer brooks that gently flow,
And sweetly murmur as they go
Their course to wind
Amid the meadow's blooming maze.

And fancy's pencil draws for me,
As now I write these homely lines,
Some sylph that loves o'er meads to rove,
Or wander through the leafy grove,
'Mid tangled vines,
And cull the blossoms, wild and free.

If such thou be, then may there bloom
For thee an endless moon of flowers,
So that for us thou mayest prolong
The pleasing measure of thy song,
In summer bowers,
All safe from icy winter's gloom.

THE RICHMONDS' HOME.

Awake, my Muse, and breathe a fervent strain
Of distant scenes I may not view again,
And distant friends who in my absence share
My kindest thoughts, as once did I their care.

The Richmonds! at that name how quickly flies
Imagination to their home which lies
Where Midway's hills frown o'er the smiling vale,
And rear their crests to thwart the northern gale,
And where the Brandywine so stately glides
To mingle with the Delaware's blue tides.

And at that word how pleasure wakes, and pain,
Within my soul an uncongenial train,
Pain at the thought that we no more can meet,
And speed the hours with social converse sweet;
And pleasure that the past can still impart
Remembrances delightful to the heart.
Thus grief will ever mingle with our joy,
And fond regrets our happiness alloy,
And thus upon the changeful path of years,
The clouds enshroud us or the sunshine cheers.

But to me now sweet recollections come,
And fancy's pencil paints the Richmonds' home.
The fields of clover and the meadow green,
Where flowed the murmuring brook in pearly sheen,
The shady orchard and, beyond, the grove,
Where lost in dreamy thought I loved to rove,
When Autumn's dyes had decked the lordly trees,
Whose giant boughs swayed to the sighing breeze,
When the blythe squirrel garnered up his store
Of frost-brown'd nuts against the Winter hoar,
And the lone robin chirped a plaintive lay
O'er the sad ruins of the Summer gay;
The dark gray mansion with its pointed walls,
O'er which the poplar's morning shadow falls;
The porch round which the trellised roses bloom,
And load the summer gale with sweet perfume;—
Of these how oft I think! for in that spot
Of rural beauty it was once my lot
There to sojourn a few brief months, and know
The joys which kindness only can bestow.

O ne'er shall I forget those happy hours,
Which came to me as sunshine to the flowers;
And as I haste adown life's rapid stream,
Like blooming islands in the past they seem,
And ever will their pleasing memories come
To cheer my heart wherever I shall roam.

THE EARLY DEAD.

How sweet they sleep who pass away
In life's fair morn when all is gay!
Like blighted flowers they gently fade,
And in their narrow beds are laid
By weeping Love who lingers round,
And wets with tears each sacred mound.
Like pleasant dreams they pass from sight,
When life is pure, and all is bright;
And though death seals each sunny eye,
Though in the cold earth deep they lie,
The fairest tints of vernal bloom
In rich profusion deck the tomb;
Affection strews fresh roses there,
Which breathe their fragrance on the air,
And on each grassy knoll are seen
Meek violets peering through the green.

Yes, sweetly in oblivion blest,
Nor grief nor pain disturbs their rest,
While angels o'er their slumbers keep
A watch to guard their dreamless sleep,
And Memory through many a year,
To view the spot she holds most dear,
Will sadly come from day to day,
Till she too fades from earth away.

But not for e'er their sleep will last,—
O no, the dark hours vanish fast,
And time will come when night shall flee,
And fadeless light instead shall be;
And in that long-expected hour,
When death shall know a Savior's power,
When hope triumphant o'er the tomb,
Shall issue from its midnight gloom,
Then they, the early dead of earth,
Shall waken to a purer birth:
Each bud that here unopened dies,
Shall fadeless bloom beyond the skies.

Oct. 8, 1857.

LINES ON THE FUNERAL OF W. R.

Little we thought when our dear friend was leaving
Radnor and home for the land of the foe,
Little we thought of so early receiving
Dust for the manly young form we saw go.

When the last roses of summer were glowing,
Hoping though grieving he went on his way;
Little, alas! did we dream then of strewing
Over his tomb the first blossoms of May.

One unto whom his young faith had been plighted,
Crushing on her the bereavement must fall,
Quenching the beacon that hope had just lighted
Over life's pathway, now desolate all!

Who shall describe, too, a fond mother's sorrow,—
Paint in its blackness affection's despair!
But the long night ever ends in the morrow;
Faith its horizon sees cloudless and clear.

Wrapped in the flag which he died in defending,
Him we now bear to a patriot's grave;
Heart-rending sobs with soft, martial notes blending,
Form a fit dirge for the loyal and brave.

Calmer he'll rest in the bed we have made him,
Close to the spot where in childhood he played,
Than where the foe's bloody hands would have laid
him,
Far, far away in the Palmetto shade.

May, 1862.

THE SMITHY.

(A Fragment.)

The praises of the Smithy let me sing,
While all around the busy anvils ring.
Too long have martial heroes filled the place
Of highest honor with the human race;
Be mine to win the poets of our land
To chant the merits of a noble band,
Be mine to change the spirit of their lays,
And crown the Blacksmith with immortal bays.
A distant friend whom highly I esteem,
Has given me for verse this simple theme,
And when I think what gentle Cowper did,
When of the humble sofa, at the bid
Of lady fair, he wrote his matchless Task,
The kindly muse that aided him I ask
To lend my short and feeble pinions force,
And buoy me gently upward in my course,
While I of common things unsung before,
Attempt a pleasing melody to pour.

Beyond the reign of empires stretching far,
Beyond the birth of chiefs and horrid war,
Beyond the rushing waters of the flood
That cleansed our planet from polluting blood,
From Tubal-cain the sons of iron date
Their origin and handicraft so great,
He was the ancient founder of this school
Whose precepts now enable man to rule
Undoubted monarch of the land and sea,
As God designed him from the first to be.

The early workmanship of course was rude,
And little profit at the first accrued
To them who plied the blacksmith's useful trade,
And wares uncouth of brass and iron made.
The anvil was a flinty rock or stone,

The use of windy bellows was unknown,
A heavy lump of iron firmly bound
Upon a shorten'd staff was used to pound
The pliant metal which the furnace bright
Had changed from blackness to a glowing white
Invention then had but a feeble mind,
And few and simple were the things designed;
A hatchet, knife, a pointed arrow-head,
A flat and clumsy plowshare, it is said
By them whose views are sound beyond a doubt,
Were first in Tubal's Smithy hammered out.

A PROEM.

To thee my muse her humble gift would bring,
And timidly would place it at thy feet,
Ashamed that with so poor an offering,
So fair and dear a presence she should greet.

I know thou wilt not turn thy face away,
Nor scorn to listen to her homely song,
For kindness in thy heart holds constant sway,
And tender sympathies to thee belong.

And thou hast smiled upon her, and approved,
Beyond her hope, her unskilled melodies,
And gladdened by thy favor she is moved
To try once more thy graciousness to please.

There is sweet pleasure in beholding them
Whose souls we feel are nobler than our own,
Whose generous lives our selfish ways condemn,
And fill us with high thoughts before unknown.

Such is the feeling that my muse has borne,
Making her seek thee still with timid eye
Since first she saw thee on that sunny morn,
When Autumn's glories filled both earth and sky.

Perhaps the glowing wonders of the scene
That ever comes to veil the fading year,
Forced her to find for all a fitting queen,
That Autumn's splendor might not vain appear.

But since she met thee, she has only used
To see thee at a distance, and admire,
Fearing to have the privilege refused,
If she to friendship's nearness should aspire.

Her wreath of song she brings with heart sincere;
It is the best that she can gather now;
Were it of jewels rare, it would appear
Too plain to rest upon so fair a brow.

And as the Greeks imagined it no wrong
To crown Athena ruler of the air,
So would my muse enthrone thee with her song,
And robes of regal beauty bid thee wear.

THE MAY QUEEN.

Who shall be Queen of May?
The laughing children said,
And wear on this fair day
The garland round her head?
For in their childish glee,
They'd met upon the green
With happy hearts and free,
To choose their May-day Queen.

The sun in splendor glowed
From out a cloudless sky,
Near them, a brooklet flowed
With murmuring music by;
The bird songs echoing rung
Each field and woodland through,
And on the grass and leaves there hung
Bright drops of pearly dew.

Who shall be queen? said they:
An answer soon was found;
Minna shall be the Queen of May,
Was heard from all around;
In all the village none
With Minna can compare;
The May-crown she has fairly won,
And worthily will wear.

A gentle, modest maid
With eyes of sweetest blue,
Blushed at the words they said,
Nor deemed the honor due.
Queen she was chosen there,
And on her brow they bound
The spring flowers bright and fair,
In wood and meadow found.

Another year has past,
A long and changeful year,
Each day is gone at last,
And May again is here.
A pretty scene we see,
And all is bright and gay,
And birds are singing merrily
To greet the sunny day.

But she who wore the wreath
Upon her forehead bound?
Alas! her youthful form in death
Lies silent, neath the ground.
All summer long she played
Unconscious of her doom,
The Autumn saw her quickly fade,
And sink into the tomb.

And her companions meet to-day
Upon the favorite green,
They meet again but not to play,
Nor choose their May-day queen.

Oh no! the flowers that they have found,
They take with tearful eyes,
And scatter on the little mound
Where darling Minna lies.

"NOT DEATH BUT SLEEP."

O, say not death—'tis only sleep!
There angels o'er her slumbers keep
A silent watch, and on her tomb
The early rose will spread its bloom.

The wintry blasts may fiercely blow
And wrap her bed with ice and snow,
But heedless of the raging storm,
Will still repose that youthful form.

Within the home where once she smiled,
Her parents mourn their absent child,
But all the tears that mothers weep,
Can never wake her from her sleep.

The Voice once heard at Bethany,
Alone can set the sleeper free,—
And from beneath the grassy mound,
Bring her with life eternal crowned.

LOVE.

The human heart was made for love,
And though enjoying all beside,
Its cherished wish, its fond desire
Remains unsatisfied.

Shame on the wretch who idly sneers
At this the brightest, best
Of all with which the Hand Divine
Our needy race has blest.

But pity them whom truth compels
To say, I never yet have known
One gentle, sympathizing heart
That beat responsive to my own.

For only they who all their lives
Companionless have roved
Can feel how drear it is to be
Unloving and unloved.

And if there be, as some believe,
Men without souls who live and die
Just like the brute, 'tis surely those
Whom less than love can satisfy.

Within the angels' far off land,
Was born this mystic power,
Thence to our earth it early came
The light of Eden's bower.

And even now though sin has marred
Each pleasing scene beneath the skies,
The good and true can ever find
With love an earthly Paradise.

O give me, then, this priceless boon,
To keep till life is o'er:
If I have love and love's return,
What can I wish for more?

TO M. J. B.

The lines you wrote when in the mood
Which often springs from solitude,
And seldom ends in any good,
And which I call heart-sadness,

Have come; and now in my own way,
In humble verse I will essay
To turn your twilight into day
And touch the chords of gladness.

That still are strung within your heart,
Though Sorrow may with subtle art,
Try to persuade that every part
Of earthly joy has vanished.

Do not believe the syren's tale!
Looking from out the mourner's veil,
With wrinkled brow and visage pale,
Whence every thing is banished,

Save that which savors of dull care,
Of gloominess, and fell despair,
She bids you her own aspect wear,
And utter her repining.

Turn from her to our golden dreams,
Turn to that autumn sun whose beams,
Turn to that wintry moon whose gleams,
Like those bright dreams, were shining,—

Did they behold a single joy
That was not full of much alloy,
Which did its value all destroy,
And keep us ever longing

For that bright day when happy we
An island bower in some lone sea
Should find, to which we'd quickly flee,
And each to each belonging,

We'd taste within our Ellemwold
The bliss which kindred hearts unfold,
The bliss which sweet Romance oft told
Our constancy would bring us,

If we could only be away
From those that crossed our selfish way,
And marred the music of the lay
That darling Love did sing us?

‘The best laid schemes of mice and men
Oft gang aglee;’ no wonder, then,
That Love’s blind eyes should fail to ken
The future’s adverse changes.

Distance it is, remember too,
That lends enchantment to the view,
And decks the scenes with fairy hue,
Wherever Fancy ranges.

The buds of hope may swell and bloom,—
’Tis oft to deck Fruition’s tomb:
Such was, it seems, the early doom
Of many we selected.

The joys of earth can never last;
Like autumn leaflets in the blast,
They’re scattered from us far and fast,
And leave us all neglected.

Fame is a phantom that allures
With some bright vision which endures

A fleeting hour. She all secures
Of which she can deprive us,

Then leaves us to lament our lot,
Leaves us by flatterers forgot,
Leaves us alone, but leaves us not
A name that will survive us.

And Love—Alas! what has he done
To millions who have madly run
To grasp his shadow, and begun
To think success is certain.

How fiercely has the fickle god
Laid on his dupes the chastening rod
Till many a tear has wet the sod,—
But Pity drops the curtain!

As here we wander to and fro,
'Tis always well for us to know
The founts from which our pleasures flow
Are sometimes foul or baneful;

And often in our wanderings
A difference in progress brings
To those who're joined with silken strings,
A pressure that is painful.

Those thus united two by two
Too oft forget what they should do
A pleasant journey to pursue,
And fail to step together.

Lest this fault should be ours, my dear,
Both head and heart we must keep near,
Or else for hope and joy, I fear
We may have sorrow rather.

To you the past may seem more bright,
To me the future's richer light
Enraptures my inquiring sight
Whene'er I turn to view it.

It must, however, be confessed
The *present* is by far the best,
The very time in which we're blest,
 If we, dear one, but knew it.

We now are blessed beyond our thought,
Although the beauteous isle we sought
Is yet unfound; for all unbought
 We have what's always better,

A host of friends whose Christian love
And artless sympathies oft prove
A foretaste of the joys above
 When we shall cast the fetter.

We have "the Way, the Truth, the Life."
Though ours the labor and the strife,
Ours is the victory too, sweet wife,
 If we but strive to win it.

A cloud of witnesses around,
The blood of martyrs from the ground,
The notes that from high heaven resound
 Of white-robed choirs within it,

All urge us on to faith's emprise,
That in the morning we may rise
To meet our Leader in the skies,
 And drink of bliss supernal.

Why then lament for garlands past,
Why weep for blooms that never last,
But wither at the first chill blast?
 Sow seed for flowers eternal,—

Flowers that thou'l^t wear with ecstasy
In wreaths of immortality,
When thou shalt join the minstrelsy
 Around the Throne of Glory.

What wouldst thou more?—The days of old,
The stolen looks, the dreams that told

A tale of life and Ellemwold,
As dreams will tell the story?

Alas! they're gone!—but many a throng
Of choral memories all day long,
Still sing for us that dear old song,
“Indeed, I fondly love thee!”

As in the By-gone, may we yet
Still cling to hope's sure anchor, pet,
Till all desires are fully met
Far in the heavens above thee!

THE HUNTERS.

The leaves are off in Greenwood,
The snow is on the ground;
A prettier sight than Greenwood,
Is nowhere to be found.

We live in Greenwood's merry dell,
And hunters keen are we,
In Greenwood too we mean to dwell,
And hunters we mean to be.

At dawn of day when first the light
Covers the east with ruddy sheen,
None ever saw a fairer sight
Than our hunter band I ween.

Our dogs are like the game they chase,
As fleet as Autumn's gale;
Our prancing steeds to win the race
Were never known to fail.

The livelong day we track the deer
With horse, and gun, and faithful hound;
We fearless ride, and loud and clear,
We wake the mountain echoes round.

And when at eve we homeward hie,
Fatigued by weight of slaughtered deer,
Our hunters' cabin greets our eye,
Our board is spread with hunters' cheer.

When the leaves are off in Greenwood,
And the snow is on the ground,
Such merry feasts as Greenwood's
Can nowhere else be found.

A WISH.

O give me some green, sunny isle,
Far, far on the deep-sounding ocean,
Where Spring ever dwells with her smile,
And life is all free from commotion.

My spirit is vexed with the strife,
With the toil and the struggle is weary,
As in the stern conflict of life,
She faces a world cold and dreary.

She hates every thought of the proud,
The selfish, the vain, and the mulish,
Whose language so boastful and loud,
Betrays a mind little and foolish.

The multitudes giddy and wild,
Chase daily the phantom of pleasure,
And daily with sin are defiled,
Till crime is increased beyond measure.

The worst are like demons below,
The best are suspicious and chilling,
While slanders incessantly grow,
The innocent seizing and killing.

From all I turn sickened away,—
From noise, and contention, and riot,

From evils that secretly play,
I turn with a yearning for quiet.

I long for a sweet, quiet home
Far, far from the steps of intrusion,
Where follies and strife never come,
Nor aught that engenders confusion.

There happy with Nature I'd dwell,
And gather fresh courage for duty;
My bosom with rapture would swell,
As daily I gazed on her beauty.

Then give me some green, sunny isle,
Far, far on the deep-sounding ocean,
Where Spring ever dwells with her smile,
And life is all free from commotion!

FORTUNE.

Our path shall be strown with the sweetest
of blossoms,
Our sky shall be tinged with the brightest
of blue,
On us shall be lavished the favors of For-
tune,
Who fickle with others, to us shall be
true!

TO M. B. B.

I met thee in the land of dreams last night,
As Fancy led me to Owasco's shore;
Thy sweet face shone with heaven's unfading light,
Yet thou wast fond and playful as of yore.

O what surprise that on this lower plain,
Where life is but a sorrow and a tear,
And hope the only solace of our pain,
Thou whom our God has taken should'st appear!

Yet all seemed real, and the silver tone
Of thy dear voice is with me even now,
I felt thee place thy hand within my own,
And pressed the kiss of friendship on thy brow.

And long we talked together of the days
We spent beside Owasco's sunny stream,
Where first I learned to love thy childish ways,
And our acquaintance grew to fond esteem.

And strangely I forgot that thou art dead,
Or deemed the story but an idle tale,—
Forgot the bitter tears that sorrow shed
On thy poor, coffined face so chill and pale.

I may believe it was not all a dream:
Thy spirit may have come at that lone hour,
And whispered thoughts that to us mortals seem
The fleeting work of sleep's mysterious power.

For what are dreams of beauty and of joy,
But the bright pictures that the angels trace
Within our hearts of sadness, to destroy
Our vain repining, and sweet Hope replace?

THE RAIN.

I lie upon my bed,
My hand beneath my head,
 And listen to the rain,
 The ever falling rain,
The patter and the dropping of the rain.

Across the sombre sky
The leaden vapors lie,
 Chill fountains of the rain,
 The swift-descending rain
That coldly beats against the window pane.

Now to myself I seem
To wander in a dream,
 But still I hear the rain,
 The wildly dashing rain,
The patter and the dropping of the rain.

Sweet pictures of the Past
Appear before me fast,
 But vanish while the rain,
 The sorrow-laden rain
Recalls me quickly to myself again.

What sadness fills my heart,
As my visions all depart,
 And leave me but the rain,
 The idle, mocking rain,
The patter and the dropping of the rain.

Ah, why was I e'er born,
To lie here all forlorn,
 And hear the gloomy rain,
 The hope-deriding rain,
Whose cruel echoes fill my heart with pain.

'Twill beat upon my tomb,
From skies of wintry gloom:
Shall I then hear the rain,
The grieving, sobbing rain,
The patter and the dropping of the rain?

AN EPIGRAM.

Give thy thoughts to what is true,
Useful things be prompt to do,
Love the beautiful and good,
In the world be understood
Ever as the friend of right,
Loyal to the King of light.
More than gold and rubies be
Unto thee, O friend, these three
Sacred faith, hope, charity.

Gulielmus—William.

CHRIST TRIUMPHANT.

Be glory, honor, power, to him our King,
Who sits enthroned above the crystal sphere;
Let angels now their grandest anthems sing,
And all the universe his praises hear.

No more he lives in scenes of sin and woe,
The Lamb of God among the beasts of prey,
No more he daily feels his sorrows grow,
As through a hostile world he takes his way.

No more his bitter tears bedew the sod,
No more he wears the robe and thorny crown,
No more forsaken by his friends and God,
With breaking heart he lays life's burden down.

Exalted now above the heavens high,
He wears the crown of joy upon his brow;
O'erwhelmed and crushed the powers of darkness lie,
While at his feet the hosts seraphic bow.

Come forth, astonished heavens and rescued earth,
Your mighty King Jehovah's Son adore!
And conquered hell, proclaim thy Victor's worth,
Whose glorious reign endures forevermore.

CONTENT.

I cannot change my mode of life,
To suit the fashions of the hour,
Or stop to join the noisy strife
Of man with man for wealth or power.

The simple dress, the frugal meal,
The humble cottage by the stream,
Our outward penury reveal,—
I let them pass for what they seem.

Yet I am rich, I dwell in state,
The best of all things are my own;
I envy none, however great,
My campstool is an empire's throne.

BRANDYWINE.

O Brandywine, romantic stream,
Who has not heard thy name!
Thy banks where lovers rove and dream
Are linked with deathless fame;
Thy startled waters once beheld
War's bloody standard reared,
When helm and plume in days of old
Upon thy marge appeared.

Ere yet the frost had decked the corn
With Autumn's yellow dye,
The battle trump awoke the morn
Beneath September's sky;
And Washington beside thy ford
The day was forced to yield,
And Lord Cornwallis waved his sword
In triumph o'er the field.

Oh! dark the hour for Liberty,
When bursting through thy flood,
Rushed England's dauntless chivalry
Athirst for fame and blood!
Wayne, fierce as tiger on the spring,
Closed with them hand to hand,
The Britons battling for their king,
Wayne for his native land.

Thy hills then trembled at the sound,
And crimson flowed thy tide,
As doubtful conflict o'er the ground
Swept fierce from side to side.
But Victory with partial scale
To British banners fled,

And Liberty was left to wail
Heart-broken o'er her dead.

Far other scene, O Brandywine,
Thy stream presents to-day,
For peace and freedom now are thine
Beneath the sky of May;
Now crystal flows thy rippling tide
Thy flowery banks between,
And spring's delighted warblers glide
Among thy willows green.

So when the strife of life is past,
Though Death the victor be,
May I, triumphant at the last,
The reign of beauty see;
Where more refreshing waters flow,
May fadeless joys be mine,
And brighter scenes around me glow
Than thine, O Brandywine!

FOR AN ALBUM.

To thee my Muse her humble gift would bring,
And timidly would lay it at thy feet,
Ashamed that with so poor an offering
So fair and dear a presence she should greet.

I know thou wilt not turn thy face away,
Nor scorn to listen to her humble song,
For kindness in thy heart holds constant sway,
And tender sympathies to thee belong.

Yea, thou hast smiled upon her, and approved,
Beyond her hope, her unskilled melodies,
And gladdened by thy favor she is moved
To try once more thy graciousness to please.

If, then, regardless of the rules of art,
She follows whither vagrant Fancy flies,
No need has she to act the fawner's part,
Nor for her simple thoughts apologize.

There is a pleasure in the sight of them
Whose lives we feel are nobler than our own,
Whose generous deeds our selfish ways condemn
And lead to higher aims before unknown.

To such we love submissively to bow,
Forgetful of the cold and sneering crowd,
With such in childlike artlessness allow
Our lips to speak our secret thoughts aloud.

Such is the feeling that my Muse has borne,
Making her seek thee still with timid eye,
Since first she saw thee on the sunny morn
When autumn's glory filled both earth and sky.

Perhaps the glowing wonders of the scene
That ever comes to veil the fading year,
Forced her to find for all a fitting queen,
That autumn's splendor might not vain appear.

But since she met thee she has only used
To see thee at a distance, and admire,
Fearing to have the privilege refused,
If she to friendship's nearness should aspire.

Her wreath of song she brings with heart sincere;
It is the best that she can gather now;
Were it of jewels rare it would appear
Too plain to rest upon so fair a brow.

And as the Greeks imagined it no wrong
To crown Athena ruler of the air,
So would my Muse enthrone thee with her song,
And robes of regal beauty bid thee wear.

MILLIE.

Dear Millie, the golden-haired,
I think I see her still,
As in the days of our childish plays
At the school-house on the hill.

Mount Pleasant the place was called,
Of learning's plain abode,
That lonely stood by the chestnut wood,
Beside the old Gulf Road.

She was but a country child,
Unskilled in Fashion's lore,
Yet a fairer face with a sweeter grace
No city maiden wore.

With music her soul was filled,
And gladsome songs she sung,
Which many a bird with envy heard,
Tredyffrin's groves among.

Her future she thought would be
All free from toil and care;
Her hopes would live, and each year would give
Of joy an untold share.

And who has not thought the same?
We are dreamers, one and all,
And the visions sweet mislead our feet,
Till in the grave we fall.

And thus with Millie it proved,
For Fortune turned unkind,
And gave her alloy for the golden joy
She fondly hoped to find.

She married a heartless wight—
A slave to pipe and bowl,—
And labor and tears filled up the years,
And the music left her soul.

Her cheeks all their bloom then lost,
Her hair its golden sheen,
And a care-worn dame with a homely name,
The household drudge, was seen.

Thus beauty and love depart,
And men forget their sway,
Thus the bright Ideal in the gloomy Real
All sadly fades away.

The vale our young Fancy roved
Along its flowery streams,
In later years a valley of tears
And desolate ruins seems.

Yet well for us all if hope
Still lingers in the soul,
That the tempest-tossed and the travel-lost
Will reach at last their goal.

And well if the glorious land
Our youthful dreams foretold,
With its fadeless flowers shall then be ours
When we its King behold.

HOPE.

Oh! long delayed have been the sunny days
Of the loved springtime, and the sprightly lays
Of bluebird and of robin; but, at last,
The snows of winter vanish, and the blast
Gives place to soothing breezes, nor in vain
Upon the bleak earth falls the gentle rain.

Once more from out the South the melting air
Moves soft o'er field and woodland, and the fair
Young flowers, awakened from their wintry sleep,
Come forth, and our glad eyes now daily reap
Harvests of beauty, as we wander slow,
Where violets and sweet arbutus grow.

In all this wondrous change may we not find
Some token that the Future will be kind?
That time no longer envious will bring
To our sad hearts the brightness of the spring?
Then let us cherish hope: if we do well,
Our coming years shall all our past excel.

CENTENNIAL HYMN.

Amid these ancient mountains,
Within the forest shade,
Beside the crystal fountains
That God himself has made,
We meet to hear the story
Of Liberty so grand,
And praise the Lord of glory
Whose bounty fills our land.

All nature here rejoices
Beneath the summer sky;
Come then, with happy voices
And raise our anthem high,
Come, praise the God of blessing
Whose throne is fixed above,
Come all His Christ confessing,
And sing his wondrous love.

Let all these woodlands airy
Re-echo with our lay,
While Freedom's Centenary
We celebrate to-day;
Let Love and adoration
To Him the Lord of all,
Fill us and all our nation,
While on His name we call.

His words of life we'll cherish,
Inscribed in every heart,
Lest we forever perish
When we from earth depart;
Our spirits with the beauty
Of holiness we'll fill,

Intent on every duty,
Avoiding every ill.

May blessings still attend us
Through all the years to come,
And God's right arm defend us
Until we reach our home,
Where we shall sing the story
Of everlasting grace,
And in the realms of glory
Behold our Father's face.

CENTENNIAL POEM.

July 4, 1876.

A hundred years, a hundred years,
With all their smiles, with all their tears,
Have vanished since our native land
In Freedom's cause first raised her hand,
And struck those blows whose echoes still
All hearts with joy and wonder thrill.

And now we come with grateful lay,
To celebrate the golden day
On which our fathers pledged their all,
Life, fortune, honor, at the call
Of Liberty whose morning star
Shone faintly through the clouds afar.

O muse, that erst on Hellas' shore
To Homer taught thy sacred lore,
And who in Freedom's after days
Crowned Milton with immortal bays,
Inspire us, and our souls expand
With mem'ries of our heroes grand!

O noble men were they who stood
Rock-like against the swelling flood

Of tyranny that swept our strand,
And threatened to engulf our land;
Aye, noble men whose every name
Is worthy of eternal fame!

Our nation in a day was born,
While they became her hope forlorn,
And never faltered, never feared,
Until this land, to us endeared,
With peace was crowned, and Liberty
Her scepter waved from sea to sea.

'Twere long to tell what they performed,
While love of home their bosoms warmed
To finish all they had begun,
And leave for us the land they won;
Through cold and hunger, toil and pain,
Did they the boon of freedom gain.

No common strife did they begin,
No common triumph did they win;
It was a deed of grand emprise
They dared beneath these western skies,
When leagued Oppression back they hurled
All shattered to the olden world.

TO HYGEIA.

Hygeia, sprightly blooming maid,
In strength and gracefulness arrayed,
I fain would know the reason why
With me of late thou art so shy,
So painfully reserved and cold,
And not the candid friend of old.

In years agone thou wast not coy,
For thou didst guard me when a boy,

With me didst play from morn till night,
And ever watch me through the night.
I prized thee highly, and thy smile
Afforded gladness all the while.
Encouraged by thy cheering eye,
On distant journeys I would fly,
Climb trees the tallest of the wood,
Or fearless breast the rolling flood.
No sport or labor then to me
Seemed hard if countenanced by thee.
But since thou art no longer nigh,
In helpless solitude I sigh;
The buoyancy of youth is fled,
And I am like one almost dead;
No longer rugged as of old,
I needs must guard against the cold;
Avoiding winds at which I laughed,
I must e'en shun the slightest draft,
Watch all the changes of the air,
And guard against them with all care;
Don overshoes and overcoat,
And muffle up my tender throat,
If I would venture out of doors
When Boreas our land explores;
Be careful, too, of all my food,
Lest I offend my squeamish blood,
And what with whims and real wants,
My life of small enjoyment vaunts.

Not so when thou wast ever by,
Inspiring me with thy bright eye,
Until I felt so brave and strong,
That I could labor all day long,
And confident that I with thee
Could compass every land and sea.

Hygeia, why art thou so cold?
Why not regard me as of old?
I know thou dost on others smile,
But this does not my temper rile,

For I am not of that poor make
Offence at other's gain to take;
So when I plead, not jealousy,
But pining want I urge with thee.
Without thee all seems desolate,
And I, consigned to cruel fate,
Am pestered night and day with ills,
In spite of doctors and of pills,
Or rather, I should truly write,
My ills were formerly in spite
Of all belonging to the trade
Of quackery, of which, afraid,
I finally discarded all
That smells of Galen's nauseous stall;
All drugs and potions I forswore,
For they but made my trouble more.
But then my troubles do not leave,
Although my choice affords reprieve
From nasty doses made to cure
Not invalids, but leanness sure
Of doctor's purse and druggist's till,
Which credulous we strive to fill.

I drove Hippocrates away,
Why didst thou not return, I pray,
Hygeia, once kind-hearted maid,
And grant me thy unfailing aid?
I tried, thou knowest, each device
And tempted thee with all things nice,
Cool water from the mountain springs,
And Graham gems, delicious things,
Ripe fruits of every luscious kind,
That I thought suited to thy mind;
These baits I offered and far more,
Too tedious to be counted o'er,
But all in vain; thou dost not come.
To all my urging deaf and dumb,
Thou wilt not hear, thou wilt not tell
What I must do that would be well
Designed to win thy love again,

And make me now as glad as when
I roved with thee o'er hill and dale,
And thought thy love would never fail.
I know I often used thee ill,
When I was miffed, as lovers will,
But thou dost know I ne'er designed
To treat thee in a way unkind,
I thought to show a little spite,
And thus to bring the matter right.
But now, Hygeia, do forgive,
Return with me again to live;
I love thee more than books or wealth
Or babbling fame, Hygeia, Health!

AT MOTHER'S GRAVE.

Oh! mother, my mother!
Asleep in the valley at last!
Earth's joys and its sorrows
For thee, my poor mother, are past.

I stand in the fullness
Of Spring and her glory to-day,
All desolate, mother,
Though Nature is sunny and gay.

I care not, poor mother,
That roses are blooming around;
They bring me no pleasure
Since thou art laid under the ground.

In sweet early childhood,
When life's sky was azure and gold,
I never dreamed, mother,
Thou here wouldest lie silent and cold.

I recollect, mother,
Those days now evanished so long,

When hither thou leddest
Me feeble, thou sprightly and strong.

But changeful years, mother,
To me strength and hopefulness lent,
While thee, my poor mother,
With age and with sickness they bent.

Alas! at the longest,
Our earthly existence how brief!
In life's chilling autumn
We fade and we fall as a leaf.

All past is the winter,
Here again are the blossom and bee,
In garments of beauty
Spring trips through the forest and lea.

Has Death, too, a springtime,
When our cherished blossoms revive?
Does Night bring a Morning
When loved ones again are alive?

Yes, answers the prayer
Thou early didst teach me to say:
"Thy Kingdom come, Father,"
And hasten, O Christ, the glad day.

My bruised heart, as thine did,
Believes in the crowned Nazarene,
Assured He'll let nothing
Between us and Him intervene.

O joyful the meeting
Of father, and thee, and the rest
Of us, thy sad household,—
Then rescued, immortalized, blest!

Great Valley, Pa., 1874.

THE GLORY OF THE LORD.

I stand upon the mount where stood of old,
Transfigured once, the Christ of Galilee;
And faith recalls the vision: I behold
The glory of his kingdom, and I see,
With Peter, James and John the wondrous cloud,
And with them hear God's voice so clear and loud.

In the beginning first that voice was heard
Startling the reign of Chaos and old Night;
And all the depths of gloom and silence stirred
With the divine command, "Let there be light!"
And light there is, and in it all rejoice
Who list attentive to that heavenly voice.

And in it I rejoice, as now I view
The splendor of his kingdom and his throne,
By valor won, by conduct pure and true.
Christ sought God's will, and making that alone
The measure of all duty, he became
Our Captain, crowned with everlasting fame.

Obedience was the path which upward led
Our Christ to conquest matchless and complete,
In which he bruised the lying Serpent's head,
And crushed the powers of darkness under feet,
A victory like his can now be won,
If we but heed the voice, Hear ye my Son.

I stand upon the mount—around me shines
The brightness of an everlasting morn,
The stars sing sweet, my soul no more repines,
But into life anew and hope is born,
And in its peerless beauty now I see
The place in Paradise reserved for me.

In Christ I trust, I look for his return,
I patient wait the advent of the day [burn,
When through the heavens his chariot wheels shall
And every nation yield unto his sway,
And when in rich profusion shall be poured
Millennial blessings on the earth restored.

SPRING.

O lovely Spring, I've waited long,
With anxious heart, to meet thee,
And now accept the humble song
With which I come to greet thee.

Not mine to summon to mine aid
From Tempe's vale the muses,
For to my verse each heavenly maid
Her kindly aid refuses.

Yet shall I from my song refrain,
Though trite the thought and measure?
I know that naught will give thee pain
That gives to me but pleasure.

O Spring, how often in the days
Of winter stern and dreary,
I thought of thee, and longed to gaze
On scenes that never weary.

Such are the scenes where oft my feet
Amid thy blossoms wander,
And where my soul in musings sweet
Upon thy beauties ponder.

O Spring, when I was but a boy,
I gave my heart in keeping

To thee whose pleasures never cloy,
Nor end in bitter weeping.

I've loved thee more than miser loves
His heaps of golden treasure;
And Time, the Changer, only proves
My love increased in measure.

And though my heart has often bled,
And Hope forgot the morrow,
Thy hand has ever raised my head,
And given joy for sorrow.

Then ever with thee let me rove,
O Spring, my cheery maiden,
While all the air in field and grove
With sweet perfume is laden!

LINES FOR AN ALBUM.

No careless thought nor language cold
Should on the page appear,
When we address the friends we hold
Beyond all others dear;
Some pleasing subject we should take
And words of winning tone,
That as they read them we may make
Their feelings like our own.

But where, alas, such pleasing theme,
Or where such words to find,
I cannot tell, so feeble seem
The efforts of my mind.
Then what remains but here to say,
I leave you to surmise
What matchless verse I would display
Before your wondering eyes!

TO THE WOODTHRUSH.

Pretty warbler of the spring,
Welcome to thy native home,
Here shall rest thy weary wing,
Nothing tempted now to roam.

While on winter's icy bands
Glanced the sun's retiring beams,
Thou in distant summer lands
Warbledst by the flowery streams.

Oft the dark-eyed Indian maids,
Lured by thy enchanting lay,
Sought the sombre forest shades,
As the sunlight died away.

Their enraptured spirits heard,
Floating on the zephyrs bland,
Echoes in thy music, bird,
From the wondrous sunset land.

And the swarthy chieftain, too,
Listened often to thy song,
As he steered his frail canoe
Orellana's marge along.

Visions of the warrior's home
In the isles beyond the sea,
Where the brave forever roam,
Filled his soul with ecstasy.

Now sweet May with gentle showers,
And the balmy southern breeze,
Spreads our northern land with flowers,
Robes in green our leafless trees.

But the brightest vernal dawn
Would but gild a solitude,
Were thy flute-like music gone,
Peerless songster of the wood.

At the opening of the day,
Just as Sol begins his reign,
Often in the woodlands gray,
Have I listened to thy strain.

And at evening's quiet hour,
When the sun had vanished long,
And the night begun to lower,
Have I heard thy plaintive song.

Like the power of magic art,
Or some fairy's potent spell,
Stole thy music o'er my heart,
Waking thoughts I could not tell.

Warmest welcomes to thee, bird,
Loved companion of the spring,
May thy music long be heard
Making all our woodlands ring!

A MORNING CONCERT.

The darkness is flying, the daylight appears,
And the song of a robin falls sweet on my ears.

His red-breasted fellows soon join in the strain,
And far-ringing echoes take up the refrain.

A score of musicians are now in my sight,
Swinging high on the tree-tops in morning's faint light.

No flutist can equal the rich, varied notes
That gush, like a fountain, so clear from their throats.

They sing as if sorrows to them were unknown,
And purest of pleasures were ever their own.

O, thus do they worship their Maker on high,
With incense of music that floats to the sky!

If so, let the angels repeat the wild strains,
Till the chorus resounds o'er the heavenly plains!

Could I, like the robins, glide swift through the air,
I'd join in their carol, and banish all care.

From earth then departing, I'd seek the bright land,
Where Eternity's ocean is washing the strand.

I'd join the great Concert where Shining Ones raise,
With voices celestial, the anthem of praise.

EXPECTATION.

Our souls are often yearning for the bright
And beautiful that shall not pass away,
And look impatient for the fadeless light
Whose dawn shall turn our darkness into day.

And we have painted what our lives might be,
With brilliant tints from Fancy's choicest store,
But all our pictures day by day we see
Fade into gloom, to cheer us nevermore.

Then, turning from the earth our tearful eyes,
We dream of pleasure in some world unseen,
Of rapture in some land beyond the skies,
Whose bowers of beauty are forever green.

Oh! can it be that all our dreams are vain?
That madly we the tales of hope believe?
That on the shores of time lies all our gain?
And Faith's enchanting visions but deceive?

O no! the stormy main will yet be passed,
The land of joy and beauty we shall see,
Each sweet ideal will arise at last
Clad in the robes of immortality.

SUNSHINE.

O Sunshine of the joyous morn,
Out of the cloudless ether born,
Pouring thy gold upon my study floor,
I bless thee o'er and o'er.

Last eve the sky was dark with cloud
And tempest, lowering fierce and loud,
Upon the drenched and hope-forgetting earth,
Now full of light and mirth.

Deep from the chalice of delight,
Thrice happy to escape the night,
All creatures drink, and lift the voice of praise,
Inspired by thy sweet rays.

Shall I to whom more hopes belong
Seek less to raise my feeble song
Than these which only sensuous blessings share,
Thy light with food and air?

Swifter than thy bewildering flight,
My faith flies up thy path so bright,
Enraptured, Sunshine, to His brighter throne,
Thy Maker's and my own.

A REPROOF.

I praise thee not, O giddy, fickle Maiden!
Thy heart and conscience all perverse have grown,
And thou art so with worldly burdens laden,
That I thy friendship can no longer own.

Are there for girlhood's days no field of duty?
No thoughts beyond deceitful pleasure's sway?
No light but that of vain, external beauty,
Which like the dew of morning flies away?

With dress and caller, promenade and party,
Thou wasteth all thy youth's sweet, precious years
For fools' applause, and rivals' hatred hearty,
Thy own disgust, and Pity's useless tears.

Awaken out of Folly's low delusion,
Come forth into the light of Wisdom's morn,
Leave Vanity, and Fashion's coarse profusion,
False Pride's ignoble aims and fate forlorn.

So shall thy life rise into joys transcendent,
And golden fruitage all thy cares repay,
And thou shalt reign in spotless robes resplendent,
The queen of pleasures that shall ne'er decay.

MEMORY'S BELLS.

Still floating on, and floating on,
Adown the stream of time,
How often as the day is gone,
We hear at eve the chime
Of Memory's mystic bells.

Still floating on, and floating on,
E'en from the earliest hour,
When life and hope are in the dawn,
The soul can feel the power
Of Memory's fairy bells.

Still floating on, and floating on,
'Neath childhood's rosy sky,
Their mystic tones will steal upon
The heart, and wake a sigh,—
The tones of Memory's bells.

Still floating on, and floating on,
Within each later year,
For each bright scene forever gone,
We oft in sadness hear
The chime of Memory's bells.

Still floating on, and floating on,
And nearing still the sea,
They toll for all of earth that's gone,
Till we from earth are free,
Sweet Memory's mystic bells.

AUTUMN.

How sad to rove
Within the grove
When autumn clouds the sky,
And all around
Upon the ground
The withered blossoms lie.

Loosed by the breeze,
From off the trees
The leaves are falling slow,
And far and wide
The forest's pride
Lies on the cold earth low.

The bird of song
Has vanished long,
And sought a milder home
In southern vales,
Where chilling gales
And frosts can never come.

Stern ruin reigns
O'er all the plains
Where summer held her sway,
And in my mind
But gloom I find
Throughout the dreary day.

Yet in these woods
And solitudes
Who would not rather be
Than in the loud
And giddy crowd
That surges like the sea!

LIFE.

I stand upon the shore: the sea of life
Before me lies in turbulence and mystery;
And sadly I behold the constant strife
Between man's wishes and his destiny.

From nothingness we enter into time
Controlled by laws we made not, but obey
As slaves their masters. Filled with thoughts sublime
We crawl in dust, and perish in a day.

Why are we? and for what strange purpose come
To earth, whose powers oppress us and destroy?
We die, but do we live again? What home
Awaits us?—one of grief or endless joy?

O Mystery! thou scornest all our thought
To solve thee; helpless at thy feet we fall:
Something from nothing, wondrous life from nought,
This may we know, but this, alas! is all.

Where Reason stumbles helpless and undone,
Faith soars beyond the darkness into light;
She hears, she sees, till what she seeks is won,
And with the sun of Truth dispels our night.

We are because God made us, and we live
To taste his goodness, and return him praise;
We hope what his enduring love will give
To them who trust in him in all their ways.

O Nazarene, whose brief existence here
The mystery of mysteries reveals,
We cling to thee, and never more have fear:
Thy word our happiness forever seals.

DECEIVED.

I thought her innocent and strong,
A being of angelic mold,
Whose life in beauty would unfold,
Nor dreamed that she could do me wrong.

Those purifying aims that raise
The soul above ignoble things,
And lend it Hope's aspiring wings,
I missed indeed in all her ways.

But I was blinded, and I thought
That I could teach her what I knew,
And time would show the good and true
That in her life I fondly sought.

And all I asked for she professed,
And spoke of love and sympathy,
And vowed them solemnly for me,
But knew them not, much less possessed.

I gave her all I had—my trust,
My confidence amid the strife,
The bitter struggles of my life,—
But found her made of vulgar dust.

Seduced by selfishness she fled,
But backward like the Parthian hurled
At me, before the jeering world,
Her darts envenomed, as she sped.

MEETING AND PARTING.

We met in the russet autumn,
By the banks of Vernon river,
While on the trees the wayward breeze
Made every sear leaf quiver.

We met in the dreamy autumn,
When the heart is filled with sadness,
And a strange unrest in every breast
Dispels all thought of gladness.

We met in the tearful autumn,
When the lonely year was sighing
For pleasures fled and children dead
And for herself now dying.

We met in the boding autumn,
But met, alas, to sever,
And like a knell our last farewell
Sounds in our hearts forever!

IN VAIN.

It may be she is good and true
When in her sober, second thought,
But what can late repentance do
To mend the mischief she has wrought?

She broke the precious vase of love,
And cast its ottar all away;
My prayers her anger failed to move,
My tears her ruthless hand to stay.

Now she has lost her wonted power
To change the purpose of my heart;
I leave her only sorrow's dower,
As free and gladsome I depart.

THE BAPTISM.

It was the first day of the week,
A day when thoughtful Christians seek
To meditate upon the ways
Of Deity, and render praise.
I wandered forth. 'Twas afternoon;
Above, the cloudless sky of June.

With careless steps I sauntered on,
Till suddenly I came upon
A group of people gathered near
A stream of water deep and clear.
A man—a preacher as I found—
Stood by them on a rise of ground.
I learned that they had come to see

A sight unusual then to me—
To see the pious preacher lave
Some converts in the limpid wave.

The rite already was performed,
But he, with kindling fervor warmed,
Was preaching to the listening crowd,
With accents earnest but not loud,
Exhorting them to heed the word,
And yield obedience to the Lord.
When he had ended silence reigned:
His zeal, I thought, had nothing gained.

I wrongly thought, for one was moved
To act as her belief behooved.
A maiden stepped from out the throng,
Whose face I shall remember long;
A maiden with a brow serene,
On which faith, hope, and love were seen.
Enrobed in white she meekly came
To make confession of the name
Of Him whom now and evermore
Both saints and seraphim adore.
“Dost thou believe with all thy heart,”
The preacher said, as she apart
Stood from the rest and raised her head,
“In Jesus, First Born from the dead?”
The maiden answered with a nod,
“He is the Christ, the Son of God;
In Him my confidence I rest,
In Him alone can I be blest;
God helping me I will to-day
The Gospel of my Lord obey.
All earthly things I count as loss
That I may glory in His cross.”

The good man took her by the hand,
And down they walked upon the sand;
Before their steps the waves divide
Clear as the Jordan’s sacred tide;

And as they go a holy song
Resounds the shady banks along.
Now silent in the stream they stand;
The preacher slowly lifts his hand:
“Into the name of Father, Son,
And Holy Spirit, three in one,
I now baptize thee in the name
Of Jesus who to save thee came;
Buried within the yielding wave,
Like Christ within the rocky grave,
Thy sins, through his most precious blood,
Are all remitted in this flood;
Arising then to life renewed,
Attest to him thy gratitude,
By holy faith and works of love,
Till hope is realized above.”

He said, and then with tender care
Immersed the maiden young and fair.
A moment hidden from our sight,
Again she rises to the light;
Calm as the summer’s dewy morn
Out of the water she is born,
And fairer far she seemed to be
Than Venus rising from the sea;
Serene as summer’s brightest day,
She shone, rejoicing in that way
Long sought, but now in Jesus found,
Where pardon, peace, and love abound.

CROTON POND.

Surrounded by wood-covered hills,
Except on the northerly side,
And fed by the swift flowing rills,
The millpond extends itself wide.
It mirrors the changeable skies,
Which gaze there eternally down,
Now bright as a maiden's blue eyes,
Now dark with the storm-demon's frown.

How often, when I was a boy,
I came in the hot summer days,
In its cool, limpid depths to enjoy
Relief from the sun's burning rays.
Here with my companions I played,
Diving deep to the gravelly floor,
Or proof of rash bravery made
By venturing far from the shore.

O crystalline waters, one morn
Ye witnessed a sorrowful sight,
When out of your depths was upborne
Poor Hiram again to the light!
He was missing, and search being made,
His cap was picked up by the shore,
Where often with us he had played
So gaily the summer before.

Men dragged the deep bottom, and found
His body all lifeless and cold:
A funeral train and a mound,
And Hiram's sad story is told.
Owaters that mirror the skies
And picture the trees on your breast,
May he in the grave where he lies
Sleep calmly as you in your rest!

A FRAGMENT.

Put aside that volume, and come, I pray,
For I would, dear one, have a stroll to-day,
While the autumn sun on the landscape fair
Is pouring his light through the cloudless air.
Too intent, I fear, do our minds run o'er
The commonplace language of human lore;
Let us read awhile upon earth and sky
The words there imprinted for every eye.
The heavens declare the glory of God,
And the tiniest flower that springs from the sod
Bespeaks for its author a matchless skill,
Consummate wisdom, and infinite will.
But concerning the home where man shall abide
And his fate after crossing the mystical tide
Which flows between Time's and Eternity's strand,
Not a word is there written on sky, sea, or land.
Though some may imagine they truly can scan
By searching their spirits the future of man,
And pierce through the shadows of death that conceal,
A land which none but a God can reveal,
Proud dreamers are we if we question our souls
For that knowledge which He the Highest controls,
We ask—we listen—no answer can come,—
Both our souls and our bodies like Nature are dumb.

GREAT VALLEY CHURCH.

What changes astonish as hither I come
Once more to this sacred retreat,
Where often I came from my childhood's loved home,
With the worshiping people to meet.
The walls are the same, but the woodwork is changed—
A doubtful improvement, I ween—
The furniture fashion has deftly arranged,
And nothing antique can be seen.

I enter the door and sit down in a pew,
And notice the people around;
Their dresses are modish, their faces are new,
Among them a stranger I'm found.
No doubt as they cast a stray glance upon me,
They wonder that I should be here,
And think for a moment, perchance, Who is he?
And note the plain garments I wear.

I sit here and muse in this house of our God,
And think of the long-vanished days,
When they who are sleeping beneath the green sod
Assembled here weekly to praise,—
When Fletcher stood forth, an Apollos in might,
Proclaiming with fervor the word,
And multitudes turning from darkness to light,
Confessed their once crucified Lord.

I like not the ancient because it is old,
Despising the things that are new,
I value the good which the ages unfold,
And love all that's holy and true;
But Fancy, contrasting the Then and the Now,
Contends for the old-fashioned ways,
And old-time devotion, we all must allow,
Was better than our stilted praise.

The people, though simple, were truthful and just,
Religion was more than a name,
The mantle of virtue trailed not in the dust,
And folly aspired not to fame.
The country aped not the pert ways of the town,
Submissive to Vanity's thrall,
The rich were not up and the poor were not down,
And Pride was disfavored by all.

We're sadly devoid of the unction and grace
That marked the disciples of old,
Instead of the Spirit gross matter has place,
And evil is rampant and bold.
We worship by proxy, and tickets procure—
Broad-guage—for the regions above,
We doubt the old Book, and of nothing are sure,
And selfishness banishes love.

No longer, O Church, is the zealousness found
That once in thy people appeared,
Thy earnestness lies with thy dead under ground,
By Satan no more thou art feared;
The warning that once unto Sardis was sent
Full well unto thee might be said:
Be watchful, and strengthen, hold fast and repent,
Thou livest, and yet thou art dead!

O Church, from thy slumbers awake and arise!
Christ's garments of beauty put on,
Let holy commandments enlighten thine eyes,
And days of rejoicing will dawn;
Discard all traditions, and walk in the truth,
The form of sound words holding fast,
Renew, like the eagle, the strength of thy youth,
And mount to the heavens at last!

Treddyffrin, Pa.

LINNÆA.

With trivial name or common-place
Shall we thy presence greet?
Thy June-like eyes and sunny face
Demand a word that's meet.

Of all we know what shall it be?
One musical and good,
To please thine ear in infancy
And grace thy maidenhood.

Linnæa may it be, my child,
Reminding us of streams,
And vernal woods, and nature wild,
And hope's prophetic dreams.

For thou art here in light and love,
A fair, perennial flower,
And brightest stars in Heaven above
Smiled on thy natal hour.

MY BABY.

This is my prayer, O Sweet,
 Repeated day by day:
God grant thy little feet
 May never learn to stray.

His ever constant care
 May He around thee throw,
And guard from every snare,
 And save from every woe.

And may the choice be thine
 Of unseen things above,
Through power of truth divine
 And His attracting love.

Thus will the better part
 Be with thee all life long,
And Christ within thy heart
 Shall make thee wise and strong.

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